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REMOTE STORAGE

A KETTLE OF FISH

A Farcical Comedy in Three Acts

ADAPTED FROM THE GERMAN

OF

FRANZ VON SCHÖNTHAN

BOSTON

Walter H. Baker & Co.

CHARACTERS.

FREDERICK SALMON	<i>A country gentleman</i>
PAUL TURBOT	<i>His son-in-law</i>
HERPERT GRAYLING	<i>Prospecting for love</i>
DR. POLLOCK	<i>Prospecting for himself</i>
SIGNOR PESCATORE	<i>Prospecting for another</i>
CRAB	<i>A postman</i>
MRS. SALMON	<i>Salmon's better half</i>
MAUD	<i>Her daughter, married to Paul</i>
ROSA	<i>Her daughter, unmarried</i>
MINNA	<i>A maid-servant</i>

TIME.—*The present.*

COSTUMES.—*Modern.*

TIME IN REPRESENTATION.—*Two hours and a quarter.*



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REMOTE STORAGE

A KETTLE OF FISH.

ACT I.

SCENE.—*The sitting-room in an old country house, well-furnished, looking into a conservatory through which is seen a spacious garden; two doors, R. and L.; window at back, looking on to garden; furniture in good style but not modern; chairs, table, couch, &c., &c., placed as on plan.*

Gas full on during whole Act.

Enter MRS. SALMON from conservatory, followed by MINNA, with two letters and a newspaper on salver.

MRS. S. Did you tell Mrs. Dawson to come to me, Minna?

MIN. Yes, ma'am. And, if you please, here is a newspaper and a letter for her and a letter for you. (*Hands them on salver.*)

MRS. S. (*anxiously*). Give them to me please, Minna. Send Grubb to Blundell's to ask if "The Fragrant Leaflets" has arrived yet; if so let him bring a copy. Tell him to go at once; and then come back here yourself instantly, instantly.

MIN. (*going*). "Instantly." I think I've heard that word before. They want everything instantly in this house. One ought to be a flash of lightning to satisfy the missus.

(*Exit MINNA, R. 2 E.; MRS. SALMON on couch has been reading her letter; MAUD enters from conservatory.*)

MRS. S. Maud, my dear, your letters. (*Gives letter and newspaper*) Dr. Pollock, the editor of "The Fragrant Leaflets," has written accepting our invitation. He will, he says in this letter, arrive this morning. (*MINNA returns here; MAUD goes to window with letter and newspaper, which she opens.*) Minna, go upstairs into your master's room and bring down the bust of Dante.

MIN. What, ma'am, the old woman's bust?

Genires. 15 Nov. 44 Frankl.

MRS. S. Old woman! what do you mean? That's Dante, the famous poet.

MIN. I thought it was an old woman because of the nightcap.

MRS. S. Take Wellington from that pedestal and put Dante in his place.

MIN. But, ma'am, Wellington is far handsomer than Dante. (MINNA crosses.)

MRS. S. (*rises*). You don't understand. If we were expecting a general I should leave Wellington where he is; but as we are expecting an editor, everything should express our literary tastes. (*Exit MINNA, 2 E. L., with bust of Wellington from pedestal; MAUD comes down, places newspaper on table, C.*) Maud, my dear, what's amiss between you and Paul? You should not keep secrets from your mother. Your father and I have been married nearly five-and-twenty years, and I know *he* has never kept any secret from me.

MAUD. No, mamma?

MRS. S. No, my love, or he would have told me what it was. Now, you know I never approved of your marriage, and I believe that you will discover your mistake.

MAUD. Mamma, say nothing against Paul. I own that I *am* dull, and that he seems to think too much of the farm and the horses, but I am sure that——

MRS. S. Ah, you should leave this affair to your mother. She would soon set matters straight. Anyhow, as you seem to prefer to keep your own counsel, there must be an end of the question, I suppose. Come, Maud dear, and help me prepare for our distinguished guest.

(*Exeunt MRS. SALMON and MAUD, R. I E.*)

(*Enter MINNA, 2 E. L. bringing on bust of Dante, which she places on pedestal.*)

MIN. There you are, you ugly old thing. Ugh!

(*Enter GRAYLING from conservatory; comes down, R. C.*)

GRAY. What's the matter, Minna?

MIN. (*going*). Nothing, sir.

GRAY. Where is Miss Rosa?

MIN. In the garden, sir.

GRAY. Come here, I want to speak to you.

MIN. (L. C.). What a nice young man he is! and isn't he spoons on Miss Rosa!

GRAY. (*takes catalogue from his pocket; opens it, and points to a picture*). Do you know whose portrait that is?

MIN. (*astonished*). Why, if it isn't Miss Rosa and our big dog, Lion!

GRAY. Hush! Can you keep a secret? (*Gives her money.*)

MIN. I'll try, sir. (*Archly pocketing the money.*)

GRAY. Now that is the illustrated catalogue of the Art Club Exhibition. The picture which you see on page 32 is simply described as No. 728, "Portrait of a young girl with greyhound at her side," and the name of the artist is Julius Darrel. Having seen this, and recognized as I have done the portrait of Miss Rosa Salmon, you will understand that I have some reasons for coming to this house and staying here the last few days. That reason is, Miss Rosa Salmon. I am going to leave here to-day.

MIN. (*sadly*). Are you, sir?

GRAY. The passing mail will bear me off to New York.

MIN. (*aside*). I wish a passing male would bear me off to New York.

GRAY. Now, Minna, I want you to swear by this bright image of the Goddess of Liberty not to disclose a word of this interview.

MIN. Don't say any more, sir. I'll do it; anything to oblige you.

GRAY. Now, Minna! Swear to keep my secret!

MIN. I swear. (*Theatrical attitude and manner.*) Ha, ha, ha! (*Laughing.*) (*Exit MINNA, R. I E.*)

GRAY. Well, to-day is the last of my stay here. When I found the original of No. 728, Miss Rosa Salmon, was a brunette and the lady in the picture, though bearing every possible resemblance in other respects to her, had auburn curls, I thought I was going to experience a disappointment, and that all the trouble and pains I had been to, to gain an introduction to this family circle would be wasted. (*Music soft.*) But when I saw and spoke to her, I knew her at once; there was no disguising her from me. But those eyes, those magic eyes, that I am so wildly in love with, shall not dazzle me with their enchanting gaze. She must not see me at her feet just yet. By Jove, here she is! (*GRAYLING retires up into conservatory as ROSA enters.*)

(Enter ROSA, 2 E. R.; almost crying with disappointment, letter and newspaper in her hand; sits on couch, R.
Music ceases as ROSA gets to couch.)

ROSA. I never was so disappointed in my life. To think that my portrait in the Art Club, which the critic in this newspaper speaks so highly of, is not like me at all! It is a shame that Mr. Darrell should have presumed to alter the color of my hair just for the sake (*turns to letter in her hand as if to find out what he has written*) of producing "an artistic effect." Artistic effect, indeed! (*Rises.*) I am as angry as if papa or Paul had found out about the picture being exhibited. I wish mamma would let me tell them. I don't see what reason there can be for any secrecy. (*Sees GRAYLING.*) Oh, Mr. Grayling, I didn't notice you there——

(*As if going off, R.C. GRAYLING stops her by a gesture.*)

GRAY. Miss Salmon, you know that I am going to London to-day.

ROSA. We live in such seclusion here that the slightest event is known.

GRAY. When I first came here I told you all about my plans, the treasure I had so long sought that I had come to seek——

ROSA. Yes, and I said that I thought in divulging so much you were rather foolish.

GRAY. Foolish! Why not? Have you ever listened to the conversation of old people? What topics bring back the fire of youth to their dimmed eyes? Why the follies and escapades of their younger days; they are the evergreens in the wreath of memory. Don't you forget, that out of consideration for your old age, you will have to do something foolish one of these days. (*Laughs.*)

ROSA. I'm afraid it will be duller here than ever now you are going away, and——

GRAY. With a heavy heart, Miss Rosa.

ROSA. But with regard to the treasure you said you came here to seek. Tell me, how is your search progressing?

GRAY. Not so well as I could wish. It has not quite come up to my expectations. At first glance it appeared charming. But since, I have discovered that it possesses quite a number of small defects.

ROSA. Oh, then, you won't take it.

GRAY. That's the ridiculous part of it! I'm afraid that I shall, despite its defects.

ROSA (*crosses*). Despite its defects! Then you will be sorry for it when it is too late.

GRAY. That's what I have feared, and yet I am quite in love with it.

ROSA. Why, you talk of this treasure, as you call it, just as though it were a woman. (GRAYLING *looks at her earnestly*.) Why are you looking at me so strangely?

GRAY. (*rather taken aback*). Pray excuse me, I've noticed a wonderful likeness in you to a certain picture, No. 728, in the Art Club.

ROSA (*pretending indifference*). Really. (*With affected nonchalance*.) How interesting.

GRAY. (*aside*). The sweet little hypocrite.

ROSA. Of course it's a mere coincidence, (*going R.*) but tell me all about it.

GRAY. (*aside*). And such a demure little face with it all. (*To her.*) You would not admire it, Miss Salmon. The young lady in the picture had the most unbecoming hair I ever saw.

ROSA (*quickly*). Of course, fair hair with such eyes must look simply ridiculous.

GRAY. Excuse me, but what do *you* know about the picture?

ROSA (*aside*). Oh dear, how unfortunate! (*To him.*) Well, you know—er—Maud—er—told me all about it when she came from town. Anyhow, your suspicion is in equally bad taste.

GRAY. (*aside*). Glides out of it like an eel.

ROSA. Mr. Grayling, I think you have done me a great injustice.

GRAY. Miss Rosa, pray forgive me; let the assurance of my regret—

ROSA. I can believe in the assurance, but I can't in the regret.

(*Enter MRS. SALMON from R. I E.*)

MRS. S. I wish, Rosa dear, you would go and see if Grubb has returned with "The Fragrant Leaflets."

ROSA (*going off*). Mr. Grayling, will you come, too?

GRAY. (*to ROSA*). May I?

(*Exeunt ROSA and GRAYLING through conservatory.*)

(*Enter SALMON from door, L. 2 E.*)

SALM. Ha, Hildegard, what are you doing there?

MRS. S. Have you seen Grubb anywhere about?

SALM. They told me you had sent him to the village.

MRS. S. He should have been back long ago. (*At window.*)

SALM. Well, he'll come soon enough; why are you so impatient? (*At table.*)

MRS. S. I am impatient and anxious. When one has been waiting so long, and a much-cherished project is on the eve of realisation——

SALM. What——

MRS. S. One that may change the whole course of our lives.

SALM. What on earth do you mean, my dear?

MRS. S. Frederic, I will tell you, though I had planned a little surprise for you. But perhaps I had better prepare you.

SALM. Well, fire away! (*Sits on chair R. of table; MRS. SALMON crosses behind MR. SALMON, and stands with her arm on his shoulder.*)

MRS. S. You remember the poems you sent me during our engagement? I read them through the other day, and was touched to the heart with emotion.

SALM. Why, you don't mean to say you have kept all that rubbish? (*Rises and crosses, L.*)

MRS. S. Every line you ever wrote! I have them all in my desk, tied up with pink ribbon. But that is not their proper place, they belong to the world. (*Crosses to R. of table.*)

SALM. But, Hildegard, don't you remember that when I sent some verses to the local papers they were——

MRS. S. Declined with thanks. (*Sits on chair, R. of table.*) Probably the editors never troubled to read your poetry. 'Tis the fate of all unknown authors. But that will all be changed. (*Takes prospectus from pocket.*) A periodical called "The Fragrant Leaflets" has just been started in London, the editor is Dr. Pollock. He offers (*quoting as though from the prospectus with a rhetorical manner*) publicity and fame to all unknown talent; he seeks co-operation, not from the ranks of well-known men, but from the mass of unrecognized genius which has till now existed in obscurity.

SALM. (*laughing*). Indeed! (*Sits on couch L.*)

MRS. S. I sent a selection of your poems to the editor, and the result will be seen in the magazine I am expecting every minute.

SALM. Hildegard, you are perfectly ridiculous. (*Rises, goes to L.*) What good could it do you to see the verses in a magazine?

MRS. S. Oh! that is merely the first step; you will be talked about.

SALM. Yes! and laughed at too! I hope the editor will send back the trash unprinted.

MRS. S. I'm sure he won't. The Doctor has a heart bursting with poetry.

SALM. (*aside*). Let it burst. (*Crosses to R., aloud, severely.*) Now, remember, I won't even look at it when it comes. (*Crosses L.*)

MRS. S. Frederic!

SALM. I won't look at it, I say. (*Music begins here.*)

(*ROSA enters from 2, E. R. with card in her hand, MINNA following.*)

ROSA. Just look at this, papa.

MRS. S. Has it come? (*Rises and turns to ROSA, R.C.*)

ROSA. What, mamma?

MRS. S. Why, "The Fragrant Leaflets."

ROSA. (No. MRS. SALMON rises and crosses from R. of table to window and then to sofa, L.) But a gentleman wants to see papa, here's his card. (*Crosses front of table to C. corner.*)

SALM. (*takes card from ROSA; business with spectacles, &c.; to MINNA*). Ask him to come in. (*Exit MINNA, R. 3 E.*)

SALM. (*reading card*). "Palmiro Pescatori, private secretary to his Highness Prince Topolski." What a name! I wonder what he wants me for? (*Crosses R.*)

(*Enter MINNA showing in PESCATORI, R. 3 E.*)

MIN. This way, sir! (*Exit MINNA, R. 3 E.*)

PESC. (*following MINNA from back of stage. He is dressed in a long light frock overcoat and carries an opera hat; he advances into room with marked step, bows in an exaggerated manner, first to MRS. SALMON.*) Signora! (*To ROSA, bowing as before.*) Signorina. (*Bows to SALMON.*) Signor.

PESCATORI.

SALMON.

MRS. SALMON.

ROSA.

SALM. How d'ye do? Sir, may I ask you what has procured us this honor? (*Music, which has been piano during PESCATORI'S entrance, ceases here.*)

PESC. I beg (*appropriate gestures*) a thousand pardons if I make a mistake in the language.

SALM. (*cordially*). Oh, we shall understand each other, never fear.

MRS. S. But, unfortunately, we do not speak Italian.

PESC. Oh, signora, that makes nothing. (*Gesture*) I speak a little English, and when I want for a word I can help myself out. I was twenty-five years ballet-master at the Royal Opera; and when a word sticks in my stupid head (*gesture*) or on my stupid tongue (*gesture*), I speak it with my hand. For instance! When I wish to say, "Ti voglio bene," I do so. (*Gesture, for "to love."*)

ROSA. Ah, that means, "I love you!"

PESC. Bravo! When I wish to say "Sposare," I do so. (*Gesture of putting on wedding ring.*)

MRS. S. Marriage. That's very plain!

PESC. "Divorzio!" I do so. (*Gesture of throwing off wedding ring.*)

SALM. Aha! Divorce! That's very plain, too. There's a good deal that's very plain about the ballet. Oh, I adore the ballet.

MRS. S. Frederic!

SALM. Merely from a calisthenic point of view, my dear. Now, signor, there was Pepita! (*Enthusiastically.*) Ah! what a dancer *she* was.

PESC. (*shocked*). Oh! oh! oh! signor, do not say so. (*Gesture.*) You must see our prima ballerina in Milano, La Braggazzetta. Oh, what an artista! With Pepita art was small, so (*gesture*); the newspaper puffs were great (*gesture, stretching arms out*), so. With La Braggazzetta, the puffs were so (*gesture suggestive of smallness*), but the art (*holding his hat high above his head*), so. (*Conscious of his looking ridiculous and with exaggerated bow.*) Ladies, I beg your pardon. Ma! When I speak of art I always lose my head. (*Pushing away the chair.*)

MRS. S. Keep the chair and sit down, sit down.

PESC. You are so kind. (*Offers chair to all in turn and finally sits R. ; MR. SALMON seated chair R. of table ; ROSA seated on sofa L. with MRS. SALMON.*)

SALM. You are Prince (*business with card*) Top—Top—polski's secretary ?

PESC. Si, signor, and I come to you at his command with a most humble inquiry. (*Bows.*)

SALM. Well, sir, inquire.

PESC. His Highness is a fool (*gesture*) on the subject of art. At the Art Club he saw a painting of a lovely young lady with a big, immense (*gesture*) dog.

ROSA (*to MRS. SALMON*). Mamma! (*Frightened.*)

MRS. S. (*to ROSA*). Hush, dear!

PESC. "Palmiro," he says to me, "I must know what is that young lady's name and where she lives. But the artist he give no information, so go, seek, Palmiro"; (*in the tone of a sportsman to his dog*) seek, avanti; go seek, Palmiro!

SALM. Well, did you find the original ?

PESC. Ah, Dio mio, signor, that was not so easy! Ma! what a head I have. I seek here, I seek there (*gesture*), and finalmente, I see right in the corner of the picture a date, Nahant, 1883. (*Gesture ; draws figures in the air.*) What a head I have. I go there (*gesture*) to Nahant. I ask the big (*gesture*); I ask the little (*gesture*), and——

MRS. S. (*anxiously*). And you found out the young lady's name ?

PESC. Ah, no, signora, but I find out that the young lady who was pictured was the daughter of some one in this place.

SALM. What ? In this place ? Why, you were at Nahant last summer.

MRS. S. (*sarcastically*). My dear Frederic, can you imagine ?

ROSA (*copying her mother's tone*). Perhaps papa thinks that I——

PESC. Oh non, the signorina is not the original (*rises and bows to ROSA*)—the lady of the picture had quite other hair—red gold hair and round, so. (*Gesture suggestive of curls.*)

ROSA. You mean curls.

PESC. Si, signorina, grázia tanto.

SALM. Indeed, then it can't be my married daughter either.

MRS. S. Of course not!

PESC. Oh, that's bad: (*Sinks into chair.*)

SALM. Excuse me, it's very good. It wouldn't do for me to have my daughters sitting as models. We couldn't think of allowing such a thing, could we, Hildegard?

PESC. Ma, Dio mio. What shall I do? (*Gesture to head.*)

SALM. Ask in the neighborhood. Our neighbor, Mr. Waghorn, has a red-haired daughter, I believe. (*Rises.*)

PESC. Da vêro? (*Rises quickly.*) Oh, signor, you take a stone from my heart. (*Gesture.*) I go, signor, "stante pede," to the neighbor. (*Goes up, comes down.*) His name is?—

SALM. Waghorn. (*Business of blowing horn.*)

PESC. Ah, capisco! (*Gesture imitating MR. SALMON.*) Ah! I understand! Adio, signor, complimente, signore. (*Quick exit, C., through conservatory, 3 E. R.; business of bowing, &c.*)

SALM. (*up stage, looking after PESCATORI.*) What a curiosity! Do you know, my dear, (*comes down*) he gave me quite a turn. If I thought that either of you girls had been foolish enough to have your portraits exhibited, I would—well, you know how I hate publicity. (*Goes to window.*)

ROSA (*aside*). Mamma, what a pity it is we can't tell him.

MRS. S. (*aside*). Don't say another word about it, you great baby.

ROSA (*aside*). Pretty good for a baby to have a prince in love with her portrait!

SALM. (*has been looking out of window; draws back*). Now—how annoying!

MRS. S. (*L. of table*). What's the matter?

SALM. (*coming down L.*). Why this infernal nonsense about "The Fragrant Leaflets" keeps running in my head. (*Pause.*) Hildegard, which of my—of my poems did you send?

MRS. S. The short "Sonnets for a Lady's Album—Sonnets to the Moonlight."

SALM. H'm! h'm! Well, they are not so bad, especially that one about the moon on the woodland cottage. That was very much admired. (*Breaking out.*) I wish this rubbish would come! This terrible anxiety's making me quite nervous. (*Goes up stage.*)

(Enter GRAYLING, R. 3 E., and MAUD, R. 2 E.)

GRAY. Mr. Salmon, I thought of going up by the 1.50.

SALM. Oh, don't go before luncheon, go by the evening mail.

MAUD. Papa considers this place a perfect Paradise.

ROSA. But I should think that after New York——

MRS. S. Ah, New York!

SALM. Ah, New York! The old tune, ha, ha! The ladies are very fond of town life and are always worrying me to take a house in New York.

MRS. S. This place is so dull—a regular owl's roost! One rusts here.

SALM. Look at me! I've lived for twenty years in this "owl's roost." Am I rusty? I have had my time in town, and now I've settled down to end my days in peace.

ROSA. Yes; but, papa, we haven't had our time in town.

SALM. That doesn't matter; I've had mine.

MRS. S. That's all very well, when a man has no genius; but you——

SALM. That's another of my wife's weak points. She wants me to be somebody. As if it wasn't enough when a man can say to himself: I've always been a plain, practical man; I've never done anything particularly foolish in my life.

GRAY. So much the worse.

SALM. Why so?

GRAY. Because you've got it to do.

SALM. Excuse me.

GRAY. Excuse *me*, sir. I don't intend to be rude, but I have a firm belief that all men commit some act of folly in their lives; some great folly, and that there is no exception to the rule.

MRS. S. There must be some. (*Crosses to GRAYLING.*)

GRAY. Madam, I think not. I believe it is written in the Book of Fate that to each of us comes the hour in which we forget all that experience has taught us, and lay our offering at Folly's feet.

(*Turns, R.; MRS. SALMON comes to R. of table.*)

ROSA (*roguishly*). And may I ask if you yourself have?

GRAY. I, Miss Rosa? Oh, I propitiate the goddess by half-a-dozen little offerings daily.

SALM. (L.C.). Oh, well, I'm safely through my years of folly. I should like to see what would make me commit one foolish act!

(Enter MINNA, through conservatory, on MR. SALMON'S last line, with magazine.)

MINN. Here it is, ma'am, "The Fragrant Leaflets."

SALM. Really. (MR. SALMON—business—getting excited.)

MRS. S. (*rushes to MINNA and seizes book*). At last! Frederic! At last! Now we shall know. (*Exit MINNA.*)

SALM. (L.; nervous). Yes, now we shall know. It's really too stupid, but I am quite curious—

MRS. S. Frederic! You—you are in it!

(*Falls on his neck, c., front of table, and then crosses.*)

SALM. Is it possible? (GRAYLING crosses to L.)

MRS. S. Look, children. Your father is in print. (*Reads.*) "Flowers by the Wayside," by Frederic Salmon.

SALM. By Frederic Salmon! Give it to me. I, as author, have some interest in the matter, I believe. Yes, there it is! "Flowers by the Wayside," by Frederic Salmon!

ROSA. Papa's in print. (*Business and crosses. Turns to MRS. SALMON, kisses her, kisses MR. SALMON, turns to GRAYLING—pause.*)

MRS. S. Yes, and he may thank me for it.

SALM. (*to MRS. SALMON*). The print swims before my eyes. It's really absurd, but when one has one's name in print for the first time, it's a most peculiar feeling.

GRAY. So your husband is an author! (*To MRS. SALMON.*)

MRS. S. (*proudly*). Yes, he has another little thing in this month's magazine. The editors are so persistent!

SALM. Yes, yes, they are the plague of my life.

GRAY. Indeed! I understood that this was your first work.

MRS. S. Nothing of the kind; he has been writing for years, and has written a magnificent tragedy.

SALM. (*touching his forehead*). And there's plenty more where that came from.

ROSA. Let me see, papa. (*Crosses to L.C., and takes the magazine.*)

GRAY. May I have the pleasure, too? (*Crosses and advances.*)

SALM. If you really take an interest in such matters, I shall be glad to give you a copy. Is this the only one we have ?

(*Rings bell.*)

(*Enter MINNA, R. 3 E.*)

SALM. Send to the bookseller's at once, and order half—no, a dozen—well, say two dozen copies of this magazine, The number which contains poems by Frederic Salmon,—in short, by me.

(*Exit MINNA, R. 3 E.*)

MRS. S. (*taking magazine from ROSA*). The fifth is my favorite. I'll read it aloud.

SALM. Hildegard, I blush for you ; in the presence of the author, too !

(*Enter PAUL TURBOT hurriedly.*)

PAUL (*to MAUD*). Maud, dear, what on earth is going on ?

ALL (*turning to him*). Hsh ! hsh !

SALM. Oh ! my wife is going to read us—something ! (*With importance.*)

MRS. S. Some of my husband's poetry.

PAUL. What ! Poetry ! Ha, ha, ha ! (*Laughs aside.*)

ALL (*turning on him*). S-sh-sh !

SALM. (*severely to PAUL*). There's nothing to laugh at, Paul. (*To MRS. SALMON.*) Hildegard, proceed.

MRS. S. (*reading*).

“The moon shone on the woodland cot,
And all was quiet round the spot,
The stars gleamed in the azure sky,
As at the gate I said ‘good-bye.’”

(*All the ladies clap their hands at end of verse. PAUL, extreme R., laughing ; GRAYLING extreme L., trying to keep from laughing.*)

MRS. S. (*reading*).

“The summer sun doth gladly shine,
The leaflets wave on me and mine,
The birds are singing gladly now,
Whilst I on bended knee do bow.”

PAUL (*mimicking a puppy*). Wow ! Wow !

MRS. S. Frederic, had you written nothing but these, you—(*cannot proceed for emotion.*)

SALM. Hildegard, you have wonderful taste !

MAUD (to PAUL). Paul, for shame! Papa, the poem's lovely.

(Crosses to his side; PAUL laughs again. Business with MRS. SALMON.)

ROSA (crossing to the other side of MR. SALMON). Lovely, papa.

SALM. Maud, Rosa! (Takes one on each shoulder.) You are good girls. I never felt till now what it is to be a poet.

Picture.

R. PAUL. MRS. SALMON. MAUD. SALMON. ROSA. GRAYLING. L.

(Enter MINNA, R. 3 E.)

MIN. Please, ma'am! Please, sir. Here's a gentleman come to see you. He says his name's Pollock.

MRS. S. Ah, Frederic! at last! Minna, show him in. Leave us alone with the Doctor. (To girls; crosses, L.

Exit MINNA. *Exeunt* MAUD and ROSA, 2 E. R. *Exeunt* GRAYLING and PAUL through the conservatory.) I am glad the Doctor has come at last.

SALM. So am I. For I feel that my tragedy will be my master-piece.

MRS. S. But mind you don't wear yourself out, Frederic.

SALM. I must work; think of the time I have to make up. I'll give you a poetical simile. The fountain of poetry in me has till now only trickled. You have removed the stone from the fountain, and now it bursts forth in native grandeur.

MRS. S. Ah, Frederic! How happy this all makes me. The path is opening out before you. Pollock will give you publicity, he will be your literary godfather. (Enter DR. POLLOCK, 3 E. R., shown in by MINNA.) Welcome, welcome, Doctor. How kind of you to accept our invitation.

DR. P. Madam, I am under an obligation to you for thinking me worthy to serve such genius. (Looks at MR. SALMON.) 'Tis he, is it not? That is Frederic Salmon. Welcome, welcome, to the classic shades of Parnassus!

(Embraces him almost in his enthusiasm.)

SALM. I am delighted to entertain you here, Doctor.

DR. P. You are as I pictured you to myself. An ideal man, half poet, half metaphysician. Do you know, when I

read your poetry I said to myself, this is not the work of callow youth, a man's heart throbs 'neath this impassioned verse.

MRS. S. It does, it does. (*Ecstatically.*)

SALM. Pray be seated. (*They all sit.*)

MRS. S. What has pained me is that several editors have returned my husband's poems.

SALM. And with several unfeeling remarks, too!

DR. P. My dear sir, thousands have suffered as you have; my new magazine will change all that. "The Fragrant Leaflets" in the near future will become the asylum for the homeless in literature.

MRS. S. Such a magazine is one of the necessities of the age.

DR. P. Naturally. For instance, take my own case. Have you ever heard the name of Pollock before?

SALM. I can't remember that I ever have.

DR. P. I thought so. I have long been unknown, even as you. But we are going to change all that; talent like that of Frederic Salmon *must* come out.

SALM. Well, I tell you candidly, it pleases me very much to see my "Flowers by the Wayside" in print. I had hitherto been haunted by a doubt as to whether I possessed any real power, and —

DR. P. I see! Mistrust of self; one of the surest signs of genius.

MRS. S. You see, Frederic?

SALM. I'm very glad to hear it. But, nevertheless, I'm going to quit the lyric field.

DR. P. Perish the thought!

SALM. I *am*. I feel that the verses do not flow from my pen as in my earliest days.

DR. P. You are too modest!

SALM. I shall try the drama, and, as far as my weak powers go, endeavor to elevate the stage of the present day.

MRS. S. That will be beautiful. I'm sure it needs it!

SALM. I've nearly finished a seven act tragedy. Would you advise me to send it to one of the metropolitan theatres?

DR. P. Try the experiment! I tell you that two or three authors have the monopoly, and they use their influence to keep out the rising talent. I'll give you an idea

of their argument, it is this — To have a play produced you must have a name, to have a name you must have a play produced.

MRS. S. How cruel! (*Rises, goes to table in C.*)

DR. P. But we are going to change all that. I am going to build a theatre, and I will produce all plays by unknown authors that are submitted to me, by *unknown* authors only, mark you. Confide your manuscript to my care.

SALM. If you will allow me, I'll read it to you at once. (*Rises and crosses L.*)

DR. P. I'm — I'm afraid there's scarcely time before luncheon. (*Rises and follows MR. SALMON.*)

SALM. Oh, plenty of time, for two acts, any way. I'll fetch the manuscript from my study. (*Crosses L.*)

DR. P. (*taking paper from pocket*). Perhaps you would like to sign this contract at the same time.

SALM. Contract! Oh, I don't want any remuneration for my work.

DR. P. There's a slight mistake. This contract does not provide for any payment *to* you; it merely — as a matter of form — pledges you to take twelve copies of each issue of the magazine.

SALM. (*down L.*). But — excuse me — as a contributor —

DR. P. (*L. C.*). As a contributor you should contribute to the support of the magazine. It is to your interest that the magazine should have the largest possible circulation.

SALM. Well, certainly, seen in that light — but twelve copies! Oh, well, I'll sign the contract. (*Exit MR. SALMON, L. I. E.*)

MRS. S. But I thought we should receive one copy free of charge.

DR. P. So you shall, madam — the thirteenth.

MRS. S. Oh, I see. And now, Doctor, I want to tell you something in secret. I want to give my husband a great surprise. During our engagement he sent me a bouquet and four stanzas of poetry every day. The flowers are long since withered, but I kept every word he ever wrote. I wish to have these poems privately printed. If you could recommend me a publisher —

DR. P. What do you want with a publisher? There is another abuse; we are going to change all that. How do

publishers grow rich? By preying upon the brains of rising authors!

MRS. S. Very true.

DR. P. We are going to change all that. Our remedy is every man his own publisher. Publish the poems at your own expense, and put on the title page "Written by the Publisher — Published by the Author."

MRS. S. If you think —

DR. P. I will let you know the cost of printing and binding.

MRS. S. I should like the binding to be in high art style.

DR. P. Leave that to me. High Art! Um! High price!

MRS. S. I'll go and fetch the manuscript at once. I shall be back directly.

(Exit MRS. SALMON, R. I E.)

DR. P. (*solus*). I wonder when luncheon is coming on! There are some simple people in the world after all; but you must go to the country to find them. In big towns people are so excessively wide awake. If I only had these people in New York! They don't seem to eat much in this house. I've had a four hours' journey, and am as hungry as a wolf.

(Enter SALMON, I E. L., with a voluminous MS.; places it on table, stands L. of table.)

SALM. Here's the tragedy.

DR. P. (*aside*). Tragedy! and on an empty stomach, too!

SALM. I chose an historical subject, being of opinion that history has been very little treated by dramatists.

DR. P. Indeed!

SALM. The main incident is an episode in the life of Charles the First.

DR. P. I wish I could get a bite of something! (*Aside*.)

SALM. (*reads*). "Charles the First, historical drama, in seven acts."

DR. P. (*aside*). Seven acts, and no lunch!

SALM. (*reading*). "Scene, a banquetting hall. Enter chief steward, followed by retainers and cooks, bearing the banquet on dishes, and placing roasted peacocks, venison patties, partridge pies, etc., etc."

DR. P. (*in agonies at hearing all these dishes mentioned*). Don't, don't talk of such things. Partridge pies! Heavens! and in my condition too!

(Enter Mrs. Salmon with large bundle of MS. tied up with pink ribbon, which she hides from her husband.)

MRS. S. Frederic, will you let me speak to the Doctor alone for a minute?

SALM. Very well, I'll go and get a glass of sherry before I begin the reading. (*Exit, L. 1 E.*)

DR. P. A glass of sherry! (*Aside, following MR. SALMON.*) Oh, by the way, I —

MRS. S. (*stopping him*). Here, Doctor, here is my treasure. Poems received during our engagement. Come to my room, we can talk there without interruption.

DR. P. Madam, there's plenty of time before us. You may be busy ordering the partridge pies — I mean — the luncheon.

MRS. S. Not at all. I'll read you one or two of the best. I've marked all the gems with a red cross. (*Going, reads.*)

(PESCATORI and GRAYLING appear in conservatory talking, and come down on cue at exit of MRS. SALMON and DR. POLLOCK.)

MRS. S. "Drink to me only with thine eyes,
And I will pledge with mine!"

Beautiful, isn't it, Doctor?

DR. P. Quite Jonsonian, my dear madam.

MRS. S. "Oh, would I were a glove upon that hand,
That I might touch that cheek!"

Oh, Doctor, isn't *that* tender?

DR. P. Shakspearean, my dear madam, Shakspearean in every word. Oh, heavens! I shall faint.

(*Exit MRS. SALMON, followed by DR. POLLOCK, R. 1 E.*
GRAYLING and PESCATORI come down C.)

GRAY. And so your Prince is very anxious to find the original of No. 728?

PESC. Oh, signor, he is one madman for the original of the picture.

GRAY. You don't say so?

PESC. He telegraph me always, "Seek, Palmiro." (*Gestures.*)

GRAY. (*aside*). I do not like this love-sick Prince. (*Aloud.*) Indeed!

PESC. Madonna! I seek, (*gesture*) but I find nothing.
(*Gesture of despair.*)

GRAY. Thank goodness!

PESC. I've knocked at every door (*gesture*) in this place. Ma niente! One has no daughter, one has seven, but they were not at Nahant, and another has a daughter so high. (*Gesture, moves infant in his arms.*) Corpo di Bacco! Ma finalmente! I found a young lady here!

GRAY. The original?

PESC. Non — ma, that's nothing. I was so glad. Oh, she was so lovely; so very, very lovely; so sapette — what shall I say? — sapette, una bella ragazza, con occhi (*shows eyes*) così grandi, una bocchina, (*shows mouth*) così piccola ed orrecchi, (*shows ears*) — ebbene, una bellezza, come non vide mai!

GRAY. (*smiling*). Very good. Proceed.

PESC. Ah, signor, you laugh because my stupid heart runs away with my silly head!

GRAY. Yes, I know all about the hot Italian blood.

PESC. Sì, signor — hot blood. In an English heart it goes tick-tack, tick-tack, tick-tack. (*Slowly.*) But Italian hearts go tick-tack, tick-tack, tick-tack. (*Very quickly.*)

GRAY. Very good; but why have you returned?

PESC. I want to speak to her again.

GRAY. (*aside*). Then he can't be got out of the way too quickly.

PESC. I wish to see the young lady.

GRAY. (*quickly*). You'll do nothing of the kind — I mean I shouldn't advise you to. The affair's very simple. They told you at Nahant that the young lady came from here?

PESC. Sì, signor.

GRAY. Very well; now you cannot find her here?

PESC. Sì, signor.

GRAY. Then the conclusion is simply that when she left Nahant she went somewhere else. So you should not have asked where she came from, but where she went to.

PESC. Ma sì, signor. Oh! oh! oh! I never thought of that. (*Crosses.*)

GRAY. (*imitating him*). That's because in your Italian head the ideas go tick-tack, tick-tack, tick-tack (*slowly*); while in an English head they go tick-tack, tick-tack, tick-tack. (*Very quickly.*)

PESC. (*laughing*). E vero, signor! E vero!

GRAY. So you had better go to Nahant at once. It is nearly one now.

PESC. I will make my *adieux* to the ladies. (*Tries to cross to R.*)

GRAY. You'll have no time, as the express leaves at 1.50. Here, take your hat; *bon voyage*. (*Pushes him up.*)

PESC. But —

GRAY. The deuce! Too late!

(*Enter ROSA, R. 2 E.*)

ROSA. Ah, signor, have you returned?

GRAY. Pray don't detain Signor Pescatori; he's just trying to catch a train.

ROSA. Are you going back to Nahant, still looking for the original of No. 728?

PESC. Sì, signorina, if you could assist me —

ROSA. The Prince seems impatient —

GRAY. Miss Rosa, I think your mamma was calling for you.

ROSA. Mamma? Please excuse me, I will return directly. (*Exit, R. 2 E.*)

GRAY. (*aside*). Thank Heaven. (*To PESCATORI*) You're saved. Go to the station at once, and you may catch the train — it leaves at 1.30.

PESC. Madonna! Then I must make haste. A rivederci, Signor! I telegraph to the Prince that I am on the right track. Oh, what a head I have! A rivederci, Signor — a rivederci. (*Exit, R. 3 E.*)

GRAY. At last. It was high time. And I have fallen in love with such a good-for-nothing, darling little witch! And yet I'm sure her coquetry is only an additional charm; to *me* at all events. The pursuit of this Prince will, I fear, dazzle her till, like a child staring at the sun, when she turns to me she will see nothing but a black speck. And not such a bad speck either, if she would only be content without a title —

(*Enter ROSA and MAUD, R. 1 E., followed by PAUL.*)

ROSA. Well, is the Signor gone?

GRAY. Yes, I could not detain him.

ROSA. Indeed, you seemed very anxious to get rid of him, and I am exceedingly annoyed at your interference.

GRAY. But, Miss Rosa —

ROSA. Don't speak to me, (*Turns up stage away from him.*)

(Enter MRS. SALMON.)

MRS. S. I am glad to find you here. I want your aid.

MAUD. What is it, mamma?

MRS. S. I reckon upon your assistance as well, Mr. Grayling. Where's your father?

MAUD. In his study, writing.

MRS. S. (*crossing to L. I E.*). I hope he will not begin working himself too much. (*Knocking at door.*) Frederic, do leave off one minute.

(*Enter SALMON, M.S. in hand, and a pen in his mouth; he crosses to C. of stage.*)

SALM. What do you want, dear? I'm sorry you disturbed me. I had just got an original idea.

ROSA (*saucily*). Really, papa? An *original* idea? Whose?

MRS. S. Frederic, I have been talking to the Doctor, and he has convinced me that your genius is cramped here—that it needs the stimulus of a great city—in fact, that we *must* go to New York.

SALM. (*weakly*). Hildegard!

MRS. S. It is necessary. A man who works for the public should live in public.

GRAY. I know of some excellent rooms to be let opposite mine. Allow me to assist you by taking the apartments for you.

PAUL (*to MAUD*). Shall we go as well if the governor says yes?

SALM. Well, since you all seem so determined, and the Doctor so strongly recommends it, I won't hold out. I'm so fond of country life and quiet myself—But mind, it must be for a few weeks only.

MRS. S. Then you consent! (*Crosses to R. I E.; rushes towards door whence DR. POLLOCK made his exit.*) Come in, Doctor, you can read the poems later on. It's all settled.

(*Enter DR. POLLOCK; he crosses to C. and faces MR. SALMON.*)

DR. P. Indeed! (*Aside.*) I'm absolutely starving!

MRS. S. We are going for a time to New York. (*Soft music.*)

DR. P. I congratulate you. (*Stands on chair by table, c.*) Ladies and Gentlemen, — This marks an epoch in modern literature, and calls for a few remarks from me. Ladies and gentlemen, could Guttenburg, when he invented the art of printing, have known that —

(*Enter MINNA, 3 E. R.*)

MIN. Luncheon's on the table!

(*Stays at door, holding it open.*)

DR. P. At last! Permit me, Mrs. Partridge — I beg your pardon, Mrs. Salmon, of course. (*Bursting with joy at the announcement of luncheon, makes an exaggerated jump from the chair, rushes up, then down to MRS. SALMON, catches hold of her, and makes for R. 3 E.; PAUL and MAUD follow, and GRAYLING and ROSA going last; MINNA at door. Business, ROSA and GRAYLING; GRAYLING offers his arm to ROSA; she coquettishly refuses, and takes her father's arm in an affectionate manner.*)

CURTAIN.

(*Not too quick, as music swells.*)

ACT II.

SCENE. — *Handsomely furnished room; gas full on at commencement of Act; MINNA discovered as the curtain goes up; she is singing the Nature Waltz from "The Merry War." The music, which takes up curtain, continues until cue marked to stop same.*

MIN. (*dancing before glass R., and trying a wreath of flowers in her hair*). Oh, what a lovely waltz! I hope they'll play it to-night. Those flowers will look lovely. I took them from Miss Rosie's garden hat. What can it matter whether they stay in her wardrobe, or go to the ball with me! I wonder whether the missus will let me go. I do love dancing, and these New York men dance so well — (*murmuring air*) — smoothly — just one turn more. (*Dancing and singing. Enter PESCATORI, L. C., back; he sees her dancing, becomes enthusiastic, and dances till at end of song, she turns and falls into his arms; ballet pose; jumping away from him.*) Oh! what do you want? (*Music ceases here.*)

PESC. Oh! I beg pardon, but if I see a pretty girl dance so, tra-la-la, my feet go tra-la-la, so, too.

MIN. Oh, you are too old for such tra-la-la rubbish.

PESC. Too old! Oh, oh! I'm not old yet; I—

(*Enter MRS. SALMON; R. I. E; MINNA retires, C. back.*)

MRS. S. Here so soon, signor?

PESC. Signora, I received your little letter, and—

MRS. S. (*R. to MINNA*). Go to Miss Rosa, and tell her I wish to see her at once. (*Exit MINNA, 2 E. R.*) I presume you have just returned from Nahant?

PESC. Si, signora; but I have found out nothing.

MRS. S. I wrote to you that I might, perhaps, furnish you with a clue to the original of the portrait No. 728.

PESC. Oh, signora! if you can do that—

MRS. S. Perhaps I may, but I am not quite certain at present. I should like to talk over this matter with you in private.

PESC. Oh, signora! you have my whole heart. (*Gest-ure.*) Look through it. What would you know?

MRS. S. Then, if you would follow me. (*Going.*)

PESC. Ma si, with much pleasure.

(*As soon as her back is turned, he recommences waltz step.*)

MRS. S. (*turning*). You spoke.

PESC. (*stopping suddenly*). Prego, signora, prego. (*Business repeated; exeunt, R. I E.*)

(*Enter MINNA, 2 E. R., with a cloak over her arm and a pair of satin shoes in her hand.*)

MIN. (*speaking off.*) Very well, miss. I'll see to it.

(*Enter GRAYLING, C. from L.*)

GRAY. Minna, wasn't Signor Pescatori here just now?

MIN. The old Italian? Yes.

GRAY. What is he doing here?

MIN. I don't know; he's with old missus now. He danced with me and called it tra-la-la-ing. (*Places herself in ballet pose with shoes over her head.*)

GRAY. (*pointing to shoes*). What have you got there?

MIN. (*laughing*). Shoes! Why those are Miss Rosie's shoes.

GRAY. Ah! Indeed! What charming shoes. Will you tell Miss Rosa I should like to see her!

MIN. Yes, sir. I'll tell her at once.

GRAY. Very good. (*Giving money.*) Add this to your collection of coins. (*As he gives money he touches the shoe.*) They really are sweet little shoes.

MIN. Well, I declare. (*Goes off laughing, R. 2 E.*)

GRAY. I wonder if she's laughing at me. Well, I'm ridiculously in love with this little coquette, and what's more absurd, I've no idea what her views on the subject are. I have not had a minute alone with her since she's been in New York. I do nothing but stand at my window and look over at hers. Now that this meddling Italian has come back I must see Rosa, and declare myself before he has a chance to meet her.

(*Enter ROSA, R. 2. E., back.*)

ROSA. How are you, Mr. Grayling?

GRAY. I've come to beg a few minutes serious conversation with you.

ROSA. Well, I ought to go to mamma at once, but —

GRAY. I should be extremely obliged if you would give me the preference. I've been seeking this interview for the last two days.

ROSA (*aside*). So have I.

GRAY. I have something to tell you that you alone must hear.

ROSA. Indeed! (*Aside.*) Now he'll find out if he can get the treasure he wanted.

GRAY. Well, then, my dear Miss Rosa —

ROSA. *Apròpos*, do you know that Signor Pescatori has returned?

GRAY. Indeed! (*Aside.*) I wish I had sent him to Europe.

ROSA. Perhaps you know Prince Topolski?

GRAY. I only know he is an enthusiastic sportsman, and thinks of nothing but dogs and horses. But to return to my —

ROSA. One moment; can you tell me what position the wife of a prince would hold at Court?

GRAY. Are you so deeply interested in the Prince?

ROSA. Can't you understand my interest? In these prosaic days the whole story sounds like a fairy tale. The Prince falls in love with a girl's picture. He knows nothing of the girl, but he loves her. He does not try to find out who she is, or what her defects are. He sends out his messenger, and when the lucky girl is found —

GRAY. Lucky! Then you think the young lady is fortunate?

ROSA. To be the wife of a millionaire prince, certainly.

GRAY. But if you know nothing more of this man than his pedigree and rent-roll, it seems to me that the chief element of happiness is wanting.

ROSA. That is —

GRAY. (*with feeling*). That without which there can be no true happiness — Love.

ROSA. (*laughing*). Oh, Love! — excuse me, I know nothing whatever about it. I've read a great deal about it, and it's very charming in novels and plays. But what little I've seen in real life appeared utterly nonsensical.

GRAY. But, Miss Rosa —

ROSA. I think gentlemen are apt to set too high a value on their love. They take things too easily. They merely say, I love you, and expect a woman to give up home and friends, and throw herself at their feet. (*Quietly*.) But you had something to say to me?

GRAY. I! — I!

ROSA (*impatiently*). You said so just now.

GRAY. (*bitterly*). Oh, yes! But never mind that, Miss Rosa; I have no more to say.

ROSA (*piqued*). Oh, indeed! then I may go, I presume!

GRAY. Oh, no —

ROSA. Oh, don't apologize. If you were rude I've no doubt it was my fault. I'll take care it sha'n't occur again. (*Going*.)

GRAY. I beg you not to leave me now. You must hear me.

ROSA. Excuse me, sir, I neither must nor will hear you, not now, nor at any time. Adieu. (*Exit, R. I E.*)

GRAY. Well, that's pretty plain! But I need not be surprised that she prefers a title and desires riches. It's quite natural, human nature all over. (*Suddenly bursting out*.) No, by Jove, it's not natural to encourage a poor fellow till he believes her an angel, and then to interrupt him with questions on court etiquette and rent-rolls is inhuman! How infernally hard it is to be in love, and yet retain one's common-sense.

(*Enter MRS. SALMON, R. I E.*)

MRS. S. I've only just heard that you called.

GRAY. I won't detain you, madam. I hear you have another visitor — Signor Pescatori. (*Going*.)

MRS. S. Oh, he's gone. Please don't go. I've been wishing for a chance to tell you how much we're indebted to you.

GRAY. But, madam —

MRS. S. I really mean it. (*Sits on settee, L. C.*) Had it not been for you, we should never have come to New York.

GRAY. And may I hope that New York life fulfils your expectations?

MRS. S. To speak plainly — not quite.

GRAY. Indeed!

(*Enter MINNA, R. 2 E., with two candelabra unlighted, which she places on mantelpiece; she lays some letters, &c., on table, R.C.*)

MRS. S. (*continuing*). It's a great advantage, as far as my husband's literary work is concerned. But I am not accustomed to being so much alone. My daughter and her husband are out the entire day. My husband never gets up till midday, and no wonder, for he insists on working all night with the Doctor.

GRAY. I've often noticed from my window opposite that his lamp is burning till a very late hour

MIN. Good gracious, the lamp!

MRS. S. What's the matter?

MIN. I took master's lamp to be repaired yesterday morning, and I've forgotten to bring it back.

MRS. S. Then, Minna, your forgetfulness must have wasted your master's whole evening.

MIN. I'm so sorry, ma'am. I'll go for it at once. (*Exit, L.C.*)

MRS. S. That's the reason he's been cross this morning — he said nothing, but I could see that there was something wrong.

(*Enter MR. SALMON, a pen behind each ear and one in his hand; GRAYLING, L. 2 E.; moves at back to R.*)

SALM. Hildegard, is the post come in yet? Oh, how d'ye do, Grayling?

MRS. S. (*going to table*). Here it is, dear! (*Soothingly.*) Do you still feel put out, dear?

SALM. Put out! Of course I'm put out. The fact is I'm overworked, this writing wearies me. (*Crosses to L.C.*)

MRS. S. But you were not writing last night.

SALM. Yes, I was, on my society novel. (*Sits on settee.*) Do you know, sir, it's strange, but I do my best work at night. When all around is still, the household sleeps, I go on adding chapter to chapter.

GRAY. By the light of your solitary taper, like Tasso in his dungeon.

SALM. Taper! No, I always use a reading-lamp.

MRS. S. Frederic, did you use a lamp last night?

SALM. Of course I did! Why not? (*Rises and crosses, R.*)

MRS. S. Frederic! (*Looks at him sternly.*)

GRAY. (*C., behind table.*) That lamp's going to explode. (*Exit, L. C.*)

SALM. Why, what's the matter with you?

MRS. S. Your lamp was sent to be repaired two days ago.

SALM. (*sinking in chair, R.*) Great heavens!

MRS. S. Then you've been deceiving me. Oh, how could you? (*Sits L. C. on settee and cries.*)

SALM. But, my darling, let me explain.

MRS. S. Yes, you *must* explain where you've been all night! I don't believe last night was the first that —

SALM. My darling, the Doctor —

MRS. S. Oh, this is cruel. Every evening I lit your lamp and kept the whole house quiet for fear of disturbing you. In the middle of the night, as I lay awake, I pictured you, steadily pursuing the path of fame, and toiling in your room, and you were not there. Frederic (*Rises and goes to him.*), where were you?

SALM. I was out with the Doctor. Why on earth can't you listen to me?

MRS. S. I utterly refuse to listen to you. (*Crosses, L.*)

(*Enter DR. POLLOCK, L. C.*)

DR. P. May I come in? Ah, at work as usual!

SALM. Yes, hard at it. (*Aside to DR. POLLOCK.*) Thank goodness you've come. (*R.*)

MRS. S. You're just in time, Doctor. (*L.*)

SALM. My wife won't believe —

MRS. S. I've made a wonderful discovery.

DR. P. I don't quite understand. (*C.*)

SALM. My lamp was being repaired last night. (*Aside to DR. POLLOCK.*)

MRS. S. I want to know what you call literary activity?

DR. P. (*aside; to MR. SALMON.*) Then she knows all?

MRS. S. Where were you and my husband last night?

DR. P. (*innocently.*) Madam, I don't understand your excitement. We were at work.

MRS. S. By the light of his reading-lamp, eh?

DR. P. Madam, do you imagine that a poet's work is done entirely at the desk? That is the least and lightest part of his labors. He must make studies of real life, collect and arrange types of character.

MRS. S. But — at night.

DR. P. Certainly at night; your husband is planning a society novel, how can he draw character without seeing it, how depict crime without studying it?

SALM. You see, darling, you see.

DR. P. The dark side of life cannot be observed by day, look at Dickens.

SALM. Yes, darling, look at Dickens, another one of us.

DR. P. Disguised as a sailor he wandered through the slums of London, never came home for days.

SALM. For days —

MRS. S. Good gracious!

SALM. And do you think he asked his wife's permission?

MRS. S. (*crossing R.*). But, Frederic, think of your health. There must be a good deal of drinking in such resorts and —

DR. P. O! I look after him, madam. I drink for both, and he keeps his head clear, I carouse — he takes notes.

MRS. S. But why not have told me before? Why deceive me?

DR. P. A true poet loves mystery,

SALM. I didn't wish to make you anxious, dearest —

DR. P. Yes, yes, that was ever his first thought.

SALM. Now, darling, be reasonable.

MRS. S. Yes, but —

SALM. It's all over now. I've collected enough material, and now I will stay at home, it's all right now, Hildy dear.

MRS. S. I begin to think it would have been better if we had never come to New York.

SALM. There, there, dear! Now go and dry your eyes.

(*Exit MRS. SALMON, R. I E.; business with SALMON before MRS. S. exits.*)

SALM. (R.) Doctor, that was rather an unpleasant experience?

DR. P. (L.) And that is not our only misfortune!

SALM. Why, what's the matter?

DR. P. I've just received a note from the printer telling me that unless his bill is paid, the "Fragrant Leaflets" must stop.

That this should have happened just now, when each number has an increasing circulation, is too bad. Your Epic was to have appeared in the next number.

SALM. Well, what's to be done?

DR. P. It's very simple — the magazine must stop.

SALM. And my great Epic?

DR. P. You must get another publisher for it.

SALM. No, no; that won't do at all. How much do you want?

DR. P. A trifle, hardly worth mentioning, a miserable little three hundred dollars.

SALM. Three hundred dollars! (*Crosses L.*) Well, well, you shall have the money. (*DR. POLLOCK crosses to R. corner, sinks into chair, R.; business.*)

DR. P. No, sir, never. I will not touch it.

SALM. Nonsense, it's hardly worth talking about. The "Fragrant Leaflets" must not stop, if only for my wife's sake. She's so delighted when she sees anything of mine in print.

DR. P. (*rises, and going C.*). Sir, you've a great heart. (*Seizes MR. SALMON'S hand.*)

SALM. Well, and on my own account I want to make a hit soon; but do you know, Doctor, I'm afraid novel-writing is not my strong point.

DR. P. What makes you think that?

SALM. I find it so hard to work out my plots. Collecting material is pleasant enough, eh! so I think that the drama — By the way, how's my tragedy getting on?

DR. P. I will print some scenes from "Charles the First" in the next number of the magazine. You'll see what a sensation it will make. The very managers who refused to look at the piece now will beg you to let them produce it.

SALM. What can the managers have to do with their time?

DR. P. Talking about theatres reminds me you've been wishing some time to go behind the scenes, in order to study the stage practically.

SALM. Yes, yes; of course, when a man is writing plays.

DR. P. Well, you can go on the stage of the opera to-night.

SALM. How can you manage that?

DR. P. A grand *bal masqué* takes place; go as Sophocles, he wrote plays as you do; the ballet is sure to be well represented there, and you can see for yourself the requirements of stage characters.

SALM. Sophocles and the ballet? Strange mixture, eh, Doctor?

DR. P. You are wrong there. The ancient Greeks were great admirers of beauty, if somewhat unadorned.

SALM. But how about *my* dress?

DR. P. The costumer who sells the tickets will provide the dress.

SALM. Splendid — but my wife.

DR. P. You'd better have a headache and go to your room, and while I engage your wife in conversation you can get away.

SALM. Doctor, you are, indeed, a friend. Hush! here come the children. (*Exeunt DR. POLLOCK and MR. SALMON.*
L. 2 E. *Business.* *Enter PAUL and MAUD in evening dress,*
L. C.)

MAUD (*speaking off*). Thank goodness, we're at home again. I'm tired to death. (*Taking off cloak and sits on settee, L. C.* PAUL *takes cloak to chair.*)

PAUL. How's that, dear, we're not doing too much?

MAUD. What do you call to-day's dissipation? A drive in the park. Lunch at Delmonico's. A *matinee* at the Lyceum. Dinner at the Brunswick. I'm completely tired out.

PAUL. Well, Maud dear, go and lie down for half an hour, and then you'll be quite fresh for the theatre.

MAUD. Must we go to the theatre to-night?

PAUL. Yes, dear, we must go, I've taken a box. Miss Fotheringay is going to appear in two of her best parts. They gave me this bill at the theatre. (*Producing play-bill.*) Fotheringay plays the "Dumb Girl," and "Come Here." In the first piece she doesn't speak a word, and the other is a monologue, and she talks for half an hour without stopping, and so makes up for lost time. That will be very interesting.

MAUD. I daresay it will, Paul, but I'm really too tired to go. Can't we spend one evening quietly at home?

PAUL. My dear Maud, we didn't come to New York to spend our evenings quietly at home. (*Places bill on sofa.*)

MAUD. Paul, I hardly know you now. Since we've been here you've become so gay —

PAUL. Yes, darling, it's the New York air —

MAUD. But you are overdoing it. Come, sit down here, while I lecture you.

PAUL. Oh, dear. (*He sits L. of settee.*)

(Enter MR. SALMON and DR. POLLOCK, L. 2 E.)

SALM. (L., *giving cheque*). There, that will satisfy the printer, Doctor. I'm going to have some new visiting cards printed. What would you advise me to put under my name? "Dramatic Poet," or "Author," or —

DR. P. I'll tell you what to put — "Man of Letters"; it sounds well, and doesn't mean much. (*Crosses, R.*)

PAUL (*coming forward*). Ah, guv'nor, how are you? I'm afraid you're overworking yourself, you look rather seedy. Why not go to the theatre? At Niblo's they are playing "The Stranger." It would be a pleasant change, and liven you up a bit.

SALM. No! no! I'm not working at present; I've got such an awful headache. Oh! oh! (*Groans.*) Such a hammering in my head. I shall go mad.

MAUD. Poor, dear papa! (*Rises and goes to him.*)

SALM. Don't pity me; go and fetch your mother.

MAUD. I will; and I'll go and fetch some eau-de-Cologne for your head.

(*Exit MAUD, R. 1 E.; DR. POLLOCK crosses back, R.*)

PAUL. I'm awfully sorry for your head.

SALM. Hush! don't condemn me unheard. It's only a little stratagem, so that I can get out unnoticed to-night.

PAUL. But, sir!

SALM. What do you mean by "But sir"? Dickens did it. They all do it now.

PAUL (C.). And where are you going?

SALM. (L.). Oh, it's innocent enough; the Doctor and I are going —

DR. P. To a *bal masqué* at the opera house.

SALM. I'm going as Sophocles, and you can stay at home and look after your mother-in-law.

PAUL (*sternly*). No, I can't do it.

SALM. My dear Paul!

PAUL. I don't think it right, and I will not help you — on the contrary, I'll —

SALM. You'll betray me!

PAUL. No sir, I'll go with you.

SALM. What?

PAUL. Calm yourself. I'll go with you. Why deprive me of such a piece of fun? Don't you agree with me, Doctor? I dare say you can manage to take me too.

DR. P. You can take my place if you like. I was going as a conspirator.

PAUL. A conspirator! that's just in my line! I'm a first-class conspirator. I believe it requires the cloak held so, and a slouch hat, and —

(Gesticulates, till MRS. SALMON enters, then stops suddenly.)

Enter MRS. S., R. I E. PAUL darts up, R.)

DR. P. He's a born conspirator.

MRS. S. My dear Frederic, Maud just told me *(crossing L.)* that you have a terrible headache.

SALM. *(L.)*. Of course, I've got a headache. I always have when I'm put out.

MRS. S. But, Frederic, it's not my fault.

SALM. Who said it was? *(Groaning.)* Oh! oh! this hammering in my head.

(Enter MINNA, R. 2 E., with two handkerchiefs and eau-de-Cologne, which she puts on table, C., then exit.)

MRS. S. Well, try and bear it. I'll put some eau-de-Cologne on this handkerchief for you.

SALM. That won't do me any good.

PAUL *(up stage; has been gesticulating; suddenly breaks out very loud)*. Oh! oh! oh!

MRS. S. Why, what's the matter with you? Have you a headache?

PAUL. Yes, ever since dinner, and it's growing worse every minute.

SALM. Oh, such pains at the back of my head! Oh! oh!

PAUL. Mine's in front. Oh! oh!

MRS. S. *(with bandage)*. Let me put this on.

SALM. Oh, no, that won't do me any good. *(She puts it on.)*

DR. P. *(who has been arranging a band for PAUL)*. Let me advise you to go to your room, and rest quietly for an hour or two.

MRS. S. Yes, Frederic, do try it.

SALM. I will. Rest always does me good.

PAUL. And I'll go with you, you can let me have the arm-chair. Oh! oh!

SALM. Well, come along, but no one else must come near us. You hear, Hildegard, no one must disturb us. *(Going.)* Oh! oh! oh! What pain.

(Exit, L. 2 E., with PAUL.)

MRS. S. It's very strange. I never remember Frederic having such a headache suddenly. I believe I ought to sit by him and bathe his head. (*Going, L.*)

DR. P. (*L. stopping her*). One moment, madam. I have a little surprise for you.

MRS. S. I've had too many little surprises to-day.

DR. P. But it's something pleasant this time. The "Rondels of a Fiancé" are published. All the booksellers will have them to-morrow. Here is a specimen copy.

(*Taking out book elegantly bound.*)

MRS. S. How good of you, my dear Doctor ; my husband must know nothing of this.

DR. P. Not a syllable.

MRS. S. How charming the binding is —

DR. P. Yes, it costs a little more than I expected.

MRS. S. Oh, I don't mind the cost. (*Aside.*) How exquisite it is to be an author's wife. (*Reads the title page.*) "Rondels of a Fiancé." (*Crosses, R.*)

DR. P. Madam, an instinct warns me that you would be alone : alone with that volume. I will take my leave! (*Going.*)

MRS. S. Many, many thanks, my dear Doctor, I hope you will take care that the book is well reviewed and criticised.

DR. P. Criticised ! Madam, pray don't mention critics to me. There's a clique. These men glance through a book, and write, and write, and write, Heaven knows what. We are going to change all that. The authors shall criticise their own works. Then nobody will be dissatisfied.

(*Business and exit quickly, L. C.*)

MRS. S. How lovely they look in print, and how many (*crossing, R.*) fond recollections these lines awaken. (*Reads.*) "Drink to me only with thine eyes, and I will pledge with mine." Lovely. This is the one written on our meeting one evening when he kissed me for the first time. (*Reads. Enter MINNA, L. C., with a lighted lamp, which she places on table.*) What a surprise for Frederic to-morrow morning. I'll lay it on his plate at breakfast. How delighted he'll be.

MIN. (*hesitating*). I want to ask you, ma'am —

MRS. S. (*R.*). Well.

MIN. (*L.*). I've been asked to a servant's ball to-night next door, and — and I want to know if you will let me go.

(Enter ROSA, R. 2. E.; she looks at the books on the table.)

MRS. S. Minna, what are you thinking of to-day, when your master is so ill? If anything happened and I wanted to send for the doctor—

MIN. But, ma'am—

MRS. S. You can't go. Some other night perhaps.

(Sits chair R.)

MIN. But some other night there won't be a ball.

(Exit, L. C.)

MRS. S. What are you doing, Rosa?

ROSA (C., back of table). I was looking for something to read. (Shows book.)

(Enter MAUD, R. 2 E., crosses at back to L.)

MAUD. Where is Paul? (A letter open in her hand.)

MRS. S. He's in there with papa. (Movement for MAUD.) But they're not to be disturbed, they have both got dreadful headaches.

MAUD. No wonder with the life we've been leading. (Coming down C.) Mamma, Lobb has just written to me from home. He says he has sent eight letters to Paul, and has received no answer. (L.)

MRS. S. What thoughtlessness! (Rises and crosses.) It's inexcusable. Did not I tell you he was not the husband for you, but you would not listen to me. When Rosa marries I shall have more to say in the matter.

ROSA (R.). Mamma, I'm not thinking of marriage.

MRS. S. That's right, darling—leave it all to me. (Mysteriously.) Who knows but that I may soon make some arrangement for you.

ROSA. Mamma!

MRS. S. Perhaps, perhaps.

(Enter MINNA, L. C. MAUD gets to settee, L.)

MIN. Signor Pescatori wants to know—

MRS. S. Pescatori! show him up instantly.

(Exit MINNA, L. C.)

ROSA (quickly). Mamma, has Signor Pescatori anything to do with this arrangement?

MRS. S. (mysteriously). Perhaps.

ROSA. Oh, mamma, please don't think of it. I couldn't—I really couldn't. (Exit quickly, R. 2 E.)

MRS. S. What does this mean?

(Enter PESCATORI, L. C. Noise of rain begins.)

PESC. Signora, I came from the opera house. I bring you the tickets you wished for. (*Giving tickets.*)

MRS. S. For to-morrow. That's really very kind of you. My son-in-law will be delighted.

PESC. Ah! the biglietti are for the Signor Turbot.

MRS. S. (C.). Yes.

PESC. (L.). Ah, then I could have given them to him just now.

MAUD. What do you mean?

PESC. Ma si! As I come from the opera I call on my old friend, Bocchini. He kept the costumier in Union Square. I could not speak to him, but I look through de little glass door, and, Dio mio! I see the Signor Turbot. He wear the dress of a brigand for the *bal masqué* at the opera to-night.

MAUD. What, my husband a brigand! (*Up stage. Getting excited.*)

PESC. (*aside*). Madonna, I have made a little mistake.

MAUD. Fancy my husband going to a *bal masqué*. This, then, is what the sudden attack of headache meant. I will go and bring him back myself. (*Crossing at back towards L. 2. E.*)

MRS. S. (*stopping her*). Maud, such a man should not be run after, he is to be despised.

MAUD (*coming down L.*). I do despise him, mamma, but I want to see him with my own eyes. (*Takes stage.*)

MRS. S. I tell you no, Maud. It is not your place. I'll send your father after him.

PESC. Ah! that is all right, then, for the Signor (*crossing c.*) Salmon is there, too; he is a Greek old man. (*Gesture.*)

MRS. S. What! My husband there! (*Rings.*) Minna! Minna! (*Goes back R. and calls out.*) My cloak and hat.

(MRS. SALMON and MAUD very excited. Rain louder; storm begins.)

MAUD. It's scandalous!

MRS. S. Signor Pescatori, escort my daughter and myself to the opera house instantly.

PESC. But, signora, it rains, it storms.

(*Enter MINNA, R. I E., with cloak and hat.*)

MRS. S. (*putting on cloak*). Signor Pescatori, you are seeking the original of that picture. I will show her to you to-morrow if you will take us to the *bal masqué* at once.

PESC. Signora, with that promise you can twist me round your finger. (*Gesture.*)

MRS. S. Then let us go. (*Noise of storm and rain louder.*)

MAUD. Come, mamma, come. (*Exit, L. C.*)

MRS. S. Follow us, signor. (*Exit, L. C.*)

PESC. Madonna! there will be an unrehearsed tableau on that stage to-night. (*Exit, L. C.*)

MIN. Well, I wonder what's going on here? Why are they rushing to the theatre? and in such awful weather. Wait a minute. The gentlemen are in there, Miss Rosie's in there. I can just slip in next door to the ball for a few minutes, just to tell my young man that I can't come. But when I am there I might just as well just take a couple of turns, they won't be back in time to catch me.

(*Runs off singing. Stage empty for a moment. Noise of storm very loud at first, thunder decreasing during following scene. Thunder heard distantly; lights half down. Enter ROSA, R. 2 E., with a lighted candle.*)

ROSA. I wonder where I left that book. (*Looking.*) I laid it here. Ah, there it is. (*Thunder.*) Oh dear, what a storm, it's enough to make anyone frightened. (*Goes to window, raises blind a little and peeps out.*) What weather! fancy having to be out in it! He's at home! at least there's a light in his room. There he goes walking up and down. How I hate a man that does nothing but walk up and down like a Polar bear in his cage! He comes to the window; he looks across. (*Angrily.*) What does he mean by looking across? (*Pulls down blind.*) There, look as much as you please now. (*Looking through window.*) What impertinence! He's looking still. I wonder how he'd like to have anyone looking at him? (*Ring heard.*) There, now he leaves his window. I hope he didn't see me. (*Looking across; ring again.*) He's just the sort of a man to think I was looking at him. (*Ring repeated several times; storm ceases.*) What are they ringing about? Is Minna deaf? (*Goes up and calls off.*) Minna! Minna! She's not there. (*Ring again.*) Who can it be? Minna! Minna! (*Ring again. She exits, L. C., and re-enters immediately with a postman; he remains at the door.*)

POSTMAN. A registered letter for Mr. Paul Turbot.

ROSA. Oh, yes. Won't you come in?

POSTMAN. No, thank you, miss, I'm dripping like a sponge — I'll wait here. (*Thunder heard.*)

ROSA. Very well. (*Goes to door.*) Paul! Paul! (*Opens*

door and enters.) No one here; of course he's in papa's room. (*Looks in MR. LARKINS' door.*) Minna! (*Calls off, c.*) Paul! Papa! papa! (*Comes down.*) Where can they all be? (*Goes to MRS. LARKINS' room.*) Mamma! (*Exits, calls off.*) Mamma, mamma! where are you? Is no one here? (*Re-enters.*) Good gracious! There's no one in the house!

POSTMAN. Well, miss! I must go now. Can't you sign for him?

ROSA (*rushing up and dragging him back*). No, no! You must not go. I can't stay here all alone!

POSTMAN. But—

ROSA. Please—please don't leave me. I shall die of fright!

POSTMAN. There, there, there, it's not so bad. (*Clap of thunder heard.*)

ROSA (*rushing to POSTMAN and clinging to him*). Oh, oh! I can't let you go. You must stay here!

POSTMAN (*taking her hands and wiping them with his handkerchief*). There, there. I'm sorry for you, but I can't stay.

ROSA. But what am I to do? I can't go out into the streets at this time of night.

POSTMAN. Is there no one you can call in, miss?

ROSA. Not a soul.

POSTMAN. None of the neighbors?

ROSA. Of the neighbors—no. (*Looking at window.*) Yes! he—he's the only person I can call in, and I'm sure he'd come. Mr. Grayling, I mean. He lives right opposite. If I ask him he'll come.

POSTMAN. I'll go and tell him. (*Going off.*)

ROSA (*stopping him*). No, no. I can't be left alone so long! No, I'll tell you what will do. You light all these candles. (*Pointing to mantel-piece. POSTMAN lights all the candles in candelabra and brings them down to table by window, where he places them. Lights full on.*) I wonder I didn't think of him before. He's so good, so noble and kind. (*Pulling blind up.*) Here, put all the lights on the window-ledge—he's sure to notice that, there—there—stand here and beckon so—see, like that. (*Pushes POSTMAN to window.*) You must take something in your hand; something white; this will do. (*Picks up play-bill so that "Come here" is*

seen.) That's capital — "Come here" — he'll understand that.

POSTMAN. There's someone at the window.

ROSA. Where? Yes — yes, it's he! now wait a minute. Now. (*Holds up bill.*) I'm sure he'll see that. Yes, he nods his head, he's coming.

POSTMAN (*blows out and replaces candelabra in their original places*). Then I suppose I can go now?

ROSA. Oh yes, you can go now. I'm not a bit frightened now he's coming. (*Gives money.*) I'm very much obliged for your kindness.

POSTMAN. Thank you, miss, that's nothing, no thanks, I couldn't leave you all alone. Good evening, miss. (*Ring heard.*) I'll go and let him in. (*Exit, L. C.*)

ROSA. But what can I tell him? I can't tell him that I was frightened, like a baby. It's terrible to be alone with him so late. He's coming up. What am I to do? (*Looks around, sees door of MRS. SALMON'S room.*) Ah! that will do. (*Goes to door and holds it open about a foot. Enter GRAYLING, L. C.*)

GRAY. Did I understand you, Miss Rosa? You called me.

ROSA (*at door*). Hush! not so loud, Mamma —

GRAY. What!

ROSA. She's in there, lying down on the sofa; she's got a terrible headache.

GRAY. I'm very sorry to hear it.

ROSA. Mamma, dear. (*Speaking off, R. I E.*) Mr. Grayling is here. (*Going to him.*) Please excuse my sending for you, but I was so nervous. I really did not know what to do. Mamma and I are quite alone in the house. I sent the servant to the chemist, and if mamma got worse some one would have to go for a doctor. Mamma was afraid you would be angry.

GRAY. (*goes to door of R. I E. and speaks without looking off*). Madam, pray make any use of me you can.

ROSA (*getting between him and the door*). Yes; and then I thought of our little disagreement this afternoon.

GRAY. Oh, let's forget it. (*Offers hand.*)

ROSA (*takes it*). Agreed. (*Loud.*) Mamma and I are very much obliged to you for coming.

GRAY. (*crossing to door, R. I E.*). I'm very sorry, madam, that you are so unwell.

ROSA (*takes GRAYLING'S arm and leads him away*). Oh! don't speak so loud. Mamma has a headache. (*Going to table.*) See here's the bandage for her head. (*Sits.*)

GRAY. (*going to her*). Let me help you! I'm a very good nurse.

ROSA. Indeed!

GRAY. Yes! I picked it up when I was in camp. (*Aside.*) Framingham.

ROSA. Have you been in the army?

GRAY. Oh, yes.

ROSA. I thought you looked like a military man.

GRAY. (*pleased*). Ah, indeed.

ROSA. Yes, you were so bold.

GRAY. Bold? I'm afraid I'm a terrible coward.

ROSA. Oh, no.

GRAY. Judge for yourself. I wanted to win a girl's heart. I found it no longer free.

ROSA. She loved another?

GRAY. No. But she possessed a whim, a childish caprice which I ought to have attacked and routed, and I threw down my arms without striking a blow.

ROSA (*suppressed*). And you loved this girl?

GRAY. I love her still.

ROSA. Was she pretty?

GRAY. (*intensely*). How shall I describe her? Her eyes looked into my soul. Her smiling mouth was eloquent in silence, her speech was like an angel's song. Oh, you see, I tremble when I think of her.

ROSA. Was she good?

GRAY. Between you and me she was a good-for-nothing little witch. But such a charming little witch! she had a hundred little faults, but her very faults became her, and were she mine she should not change one of them.

ROSA (*very quiet*). And is it all over now?

GRAY. Yes; it's all over, she would have nothing to say to me. (*Intense.*) But if I could catch her again — if I could hold her to my heart — my eyes looking into hers, I would tell my love so eloquently that it should find an echo in her heart. (*Going close to her with outstretched arms.*)

ROSA (*going to door*). Hush! hush! mamma.

GRAY. What?

ROSA. I think she called me! I'll take the bandage to

her now. (*Goes off with bandage, remains in full view of the audience, but unseen by GRAYLING.*)

GRAY. (*kissing his hand to her*). Oh, you darling, I think I require some cold bandage myself.

ROSA. I'm all in a glow. Oh, how my heart's beating!

GRAY. It must be the lights that make it so warm.

(*Blows out candles; room darkened suddenly.*)

ROSA. He loves me, really loves me. (*Anxiously.*) But he must not tell me so, not now. (*Startled.*) Why what's the matter? it's getting dark! Mr. Grayling, what are you doing?

GRAY. I — oh! I blew out one of the lights — it seemed too light — for your mother.

ROSA (*going to lamp, and turning it up*). Oh, no! mamma's much better now. (*Lights full on.*) We need not talk low any longer.

GRAY. No? (*Crossing R.*)

ROSA (L.). No! no! mamma wishes us to talk quite loud.

GRAY. But, Miss Rosie! (*Pointing to door.*) Her head!

ROSA (*loudly*). Mamma likes to hear what we are talking about.

GRAY. But to speak loud now, just when —

ROSA (*taking up theatre bill*). Miss Fotheringay is playing to-night.

GRAY. (*carelessly*). Indeed!

ROSA. Did you ever see her in the "Dumb Girl"?

GRAY. No — I mean yes! yes! she's very good.

ROSA. She must be charming.

GRAY. Yes. (*Suddenly.*) She plays the love scenes magnificently.

ROSA. Oh, tell me all about them.

GRAY. You ought to see it. Her lover Rudolph approaches, and with burning words urges his love. (*ROSA turns away, and casts down her eyes. GRAYLING speaks intently; she turns away and lowers her eyes.*) "Look at me with your fascinating eyes. Answer by one look the passionate question of my heart. Do you love me? Do you love me?" (*ROSA moves away; GRAYLING with a glance at the door — very loud.*) That's what Rudolph says — (*to ROSA*) — and when he sees her blush, he hesitates no longer, he seizes her little hand (*does so*), and presses it to his lips — (*does so*) — that's Rudolph the lover; (*business as before; to*

ROSA) and begs for a word, a sign, a pressure of the hand, to tell him that she loves him. (ROSA turns to him suddenly, and gives her other hand.) Rosa, Rosa — (embraces her) — My darling!

ROSA. Does Rudolph say that too? (*Struggling to get away.*) I heard a step, someone's coming. (*Rushes to door and blows kiss to GRAYLING.*) Adieu, adieu. (*Exit, R. 2 E.*)

GRAY. (*calling to her*). But, Rosa! (*Coming down.*) What a little angel, and she loves me! she loves — (*Pauses and looks at door of MRS. SALMON'S room.*) — Heavens! Her mother! she overheard all. Well, I'll put a bold face on it, and declare myself now. (*Standing opposite door.*) Madam, I —

(*Enter MRS. SALMON and MAUD, L.C., they stand and stare.*) As you have overheard all, I can only beg of you not to thwart my wishes! Madam, the happiness of two people depends on your answer.

MRS. S. (*very loudly*). What do you mean, Sir?

(PESCATORI leads on PAUL with a brigand's hat and boots on; and SALMON as Sophocles, his own overcoat over his fancy costume, and a band round his head; both slightly the worse for liquor. When GRAYLING says "my offering to Folly," PESCATORI releases SALMON and PAUL, and they both fall, L. Horror and disgust of MRS. SALMON and MAUD.)

GRAY. (*turning and seeing the group*). Heavens! my offering to Folly.

QUICK CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE.—Same as in Act II. Disposition of the furniture unchanged except that the *escritoire* is placed more L. C. opposite to window. Gas full on during whole Act. MRS. SALMON and PESCATORI discovered at writing-table. PESCATORI seated, L. C.

PESC. Signora, I have taken the liberty to come; may I ask how is your health?

MRS. S. Signor, I feel thoroughly upset. Last night's discovery has been a great shock to me.

PESC. Oh, signora, I am so sorry. (*Gesture.*)

MRS. S. But you did not come solely to ask after my health, you wished to remind me of my promise. Am I not right?

PESC. You are, signora, si.

MRS. S. You wish to know who is the original of that picture, No. 728. Well, prepare yourself for a surprise — it is my daughter Rosa.

PESC. Da vèro? Ma Dio mio, but the signorina has not the hair of gold.

MRS. S. The artist took upon himself to change the color of her hair.

PESC. Indeed, are you sure you do not mistake? There is a large — (*gesture*) — dog in the picture.

MRS. S. Certainly, our dog. (*Crosses R.*)

PESC. Then it is the same. Oh, signora, my heart jumps so — (*gesture*) — for joy. And I may telegraph at once to his Highness. (*Rises.*) Non e vèro?

MRS. S. Certainly; that is, without making any reference to me. The truth is, signor, that I had a reason for not acknowledging the picture to be my daughter's. That reason no longer exists, and anyone who asks may hear the whole story. You are the first to be told, as you were the first to question me on the subject.

PESC. (L., *with gesture of secrecy*). Bene, signora, molto bene. Oh, signora, I am now so happy. (*Gesture.*) I fly to the telegraph office. (*Kissing hand.*) Signora illustrissima. (*Bows, exits, L.C.*)

MRS. S. There, that has begun well, and I will take care that it ends well. I intend to have my own way this time. (*Goes towards R. I E., and returns.*)

(*Enter PAUL and MR. SALMON, L. 2 E., not seeing MRS. SALMON.*)

PAUL (C.). Come along, father, the coast is clear, and — (*Sees MRS. SALMON, and nudges MR. S., who looks at her.*)

SALM. (L.). Oh lord, Paul, don't forsake your father.

(*MRS. S. looks at them freezingly and turns to go R.*)

PAUL. My dear mother, will you — (*Stops.*)

MRS. S. (*coldly*). Well, sir. (*Stops and faces him.*)

PAUL. I had a little request —

SALM. And so had I —

MRS. S. You! (*Crosses quickly to C.*) — I will inter-

view *you* later—in private. (*To PAUL.*) Well, sir, your request?

PAUL (R.). I would like to see Maud.

MRS. S. Do you mean to insinuate that I stand between you and your wife?

PAUL. Well,—yes—I—

MRS. S. You are entirely mistaken, sir. I will tell her myself that you wish to see her.

SALM. (*going to her*). And, darling, I—

MRS. S. (*gives him one look and then turns to door, R. 2 E., knocks*). Maud, the gentleman that your father chose for your husband wishes to see you. (*Noise of door being bolted.*) Ah! you hear that, sir?

PAUL (R. C. *up*). But what does it mean?

MRS. S. (R.). It means that my daughter is determined to remain a prisoner in her own room, as long as she is compelled to be under the same roof with you. I presume you understand now?

PAUL. But, my dear mother, I beg—

MRS. S. Oh, spare your appeals, sir, that door will remain bolted.

SALM. But, Hildy dear, I—that is, we—(*Exit MRS. SALMON, R. 1 E., with an angry look at him.*) I wish she wouldn't look at me like that.

PAUL (*laughing*). Ha, ha! (*Goes up tip-toe to door R. 2 E., and knocks.*) Maud, it's I! She's gone.

MAUD (*peeping out*). Really?

PAUL. Yes. Come out.

MAUD (*rushing to his arms*). My darling Paul!

PAUL. My jewel of a wife! (*Kisses her.*)

SALM. (*astonished*). I say, what's all this?

PAUL. Oh, we made it up, didn't we, darling?

MAUD. Of course, I forgave him, papa.

SALM. (*aside*). Well, your mother wouldn't let me get in a word edgeways.

MAUD (*to SALMON*). But mamma wouldn't hear of it. She made me promise to give up Paul for ever.

PAUL. But Paul wouldn't be given up, eh dear? (*Kisses her.*)

SALM. But my dears, (*looking round*), she may come back any moment.

MAUD. Then you go and look for her, papa—ha, ha! (*Laughing.*)

PAUL. Yes, papa ; you stand here. (*Places him near door, R. 1 E.*) Keep your weather eye open, and warn us if she comes.

SALM. They all treat me like this.

PAUL. Now we're quite safe, darling. (*Kisses her, and they sit on a settee, L. C.*) Last night's occurrence was my little act of folly. But you know what I've promised for the future.

MAUD. And how will you keep your promise ?

PAUL. As closely as I hold you now. (*Embracing her.*)

SALM. Look out, mamma's coming. (*Excited.*)

PAUL. The deuce! (*MAUD rushes to room, R. 2 E., PAUL to door opposite, L. 2 E., he calls from door.*) Maud, I've an idea.

SALM. Hold on to it, sh—she's here.

(*Exeunt PAUL and MAUD.*)

(*MRS. SALMON enters, L. 1 E., crosses to table, and addresses a letter.*)

SALM. (*aside*). She shall listen to me. (*Aloud.*) Hildegard, dearest. (*Sits chair, R.*)

MRS. S. I wish to let you know that after to-day you had better take rooms at an hotel.

SALM. But—

MRS. S. My daughters and I return home to-day.

SALM. Hildegard!

MRS. S. I do not wish further to interfere with your literary work, and above all things I wish to save my children from seeing their father disgrace himself.

SALM. But what was there so very wrong ?

MRS. S. You dare to ask me that? You don't understand what a blow it was to me to see my husband, whom I have ever esteemed and honored, painted and dressed up like a clown, and surrounded by a crowd of dancers in short dresses and shamelessly *decolletées*.

SALM. Were they *decolletées*, Hildegard ? I really never noticed—I didn't even look at them. I—(*MRS. SALMON cries ; aside.*) Thank Heaven! she's softening.

MRS. S. That this should have happened on a day when I anticipated so much joy. When I had such a surprise in store for you—

SALM. Hildegard!

MRS. S. (*taking book from drawer of writing-table*). Take it, take it, though all my pleasure in it is gone.

(*Gives book to MR. SALMON and crosses to C.*)

(PAUL comes gently from door, L., and moves on tip toe to MAUD'S door, R.; MRS. SALMON suddenly moves; he flies back to L. door.)

SALM. What's this? "Rondels of a Fiancé," by Fredric Salmon.

MRS. S. They are the poems you wrote me while we were engaged.

SALM. (*falls back in chair*). Heavens and earth! Have you had them printed?

MRS. S. Yes, secretly, to give you a pleasant surprise. They will be on sale at all the booksellers' to-day.

SALM. (*tragically*). It's all over. I'm done for.

MRS. S. What do you mean?

SALM. Don't you understand? Those poems were not mine.

MRS. S. What?

SALM. That is to say, not altogether, the ideas were not original. I was borrowing from the great poets.

MRS. S. And you deceived me even at that time!

SALM. I didn't—I only gave vent to my feelings. Am I to blame because Shakespeare gave vent to the same feelings before me? Could I have dreamed that you would publish the stuff? Now I *am* in for it. I shall be the butt of the comic papers for months.

MRS. S. And I meant so well.

SALM. (*suddenly jumping up*). Where's my hat—my coat—

MRS. S. Why, where are you going?

SALM. To the bookseller's, the printer's, the grocer's, anywhere in order to buy up the books and avert this ridicule. (*Going L.C. meets GRAYLING, who seizes him by the buttonhole.*)

GRAY. Ah, Mr. Salmon, I have a request to make to you.

SALM. Excuse me; I have some pressing business.

(PAUL pops from door, L. 2 E., and catches MR. SALMON by the arm, who shakes him off. PAUL returns, L. 2 E.)

GRAY. It concerns your daughter's welfare.

SALM. Well, there's my wife; talk to her. I must go away at once. *(Exit, L.C.)*

GRAY. (L.). Madam, in the confusion of last night, I had no chance to speak to you. I come here to-day to ask from you your daughter's hand.

MRS. S. (R.). Sir, I do not wish to recall anything that passed last night; but as to your request of to-day, I must give you a decided "No" for an answer.

GRAY. But, madam —

MRS. S. Above all, my daughter has no desire for marriage.

GRAY. Madam, on the contrary, I believe I am better informed than you are.

MRS. S. And lastly, I have plans for her future which I insist shall not be thwarted.

GRAY. Madam, I cannot give up my hopes so easily. Perhaps if you were to ask Miss Rosa herself?

MRS. S. Oh, you think that Rosa herself would give a different answer. *(Going to door, R. I E.)* I can end your uncertainty on that point. *(Calls.)* Rosa.

GRAY. *(aside)*. Ah, I know I can rely upon her promise.

ROSA *(enters, R. I E.)*. Mamma! *(Sees GRAYLING.)* Oh —

MRS. S. (C.) My darling child, Mr. Grayling has just asked for your hand.

ROSA (R., *confused*). Indeed!

MRS. S. I have told him that I have other plans for you, that I am determined to choose my second son-in-law myself. *(PAUL and MAUD appear at their doors and sign to each other. Business here; MAUD, R. corner.)* Mr. Grayling imagines that you, my sweet child, could be undutiful enough to have opinions of your own.

ROSA *(archly)*. What could have led you to imagine that, Sir?

GRAY. *(astonished)*. But, Miss Rosa, I hoped —

ROSA. You were wrong to do so. I shall never do anything that my mother does not approve of.

MRS. S. *(triumphantly)*. You hear? My darling daughter. *(Kisses her.)*

PAUL *(has crossed to MAUD'S door, who now enters)*. I have something to tell you.

MRS. S. *(hears him, and turns her back on ROSA and GRAYLING)*. Why have you returned, sir?

PAUL. Oh, I really —

ROSA (*who has crossed to GRAYLING*). I'm only pretending. (L.C.) Take no notice of what I say while mamma is here.

GRAY (*takes her hand and kisses it*). Oh, you angel.
(*They whisper.*)

MRS. S. (*to PAUL*). I cannot understand this audacity.

MAUD. One moment, mamma. As this gentleman has appealed to me, I wish to tell him how much I despise him.

PAUL (*tragically*). Are you so unforgiving, Maud?

MRS. S. Silence, sir! Let my daughter continue. (*Turns to ROSA, who separates from GRAYLING, her back to PAUL and MAUD.*)

MAUD. Come here, sir. (*PAUL goes to her, they embrace. PAUL watching MRS. SALMON.*)

MRS. S. Mr. Grayling, my eldest daughter married in opposition to my wishes; you can see for yourself the sad result. (*Points to PAUL and MAUD, without turning; they are "spooning".*)

GRAY. Awful!

MRS. S. Yes, is it not sad? Two once-loving souls parted for ever. Ah! had Maud listened to me. (*Cries.*)

ROSA. Calm yourself, mamma. I will listen to you.

MRS. S. That is right, Rosa — ah, had Maud done so — (*turns to MAUD and PAUL who separate — GRAYLING seizes ROSA's hand and kisses it. Business with a rose. MRS. SALMON turns again. ROSA and GRAYLING separate.*) You see, Maud, had you obeyed me then as Rosa does now — all would have been different. Come, my poor children. (*Takes one on each shoulder. PAUL and GRAYLING stand a little behind and take MAUD and ROSA's hands and kiss them.*)

MRS. S. To-day is a sad day for us.

ROSA. Very, very sad, mamma.

MRS. S. (*releasing the girls*). And now, gentlemen, you have no further cause for uncertainty. My daughters have not been brought up like some girls, they obey in all things (*moving to door, R. I E.*) their mother. (*Exit, R. I E. with dignity.*)

PAUL. Ha, ha, ha, mamma is grand.

MAUD. You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Paul.

PAUL. So I am, dear. I'll hide my head. (*Embrace; they go up and off, R. 2 E.*)

ROSA (*to GRAYLING, coming down C.*). Argument would have been useless. Leave it all to me. I'll try and persuade mamma. I think you may safely leave your case in my hands.

MRS. S. (*outside*). Rosa!

ROSA. Let me go. (*Rushes off, R. I E.*)

GRAY. (*looking after her*). At last! At last!

SALM. (*enters, L. C., with MINNA and two boys; they are laden with packets of books*). There, that's all right. Put 'em down. (*They drop books.*) Now, call your mistress. (*Exit MINNA, R. I E.*)

GRAY. (C.) Why, what have you got there?

SALM. My complete works. The whole edition. I grudge the public even a single copy. (*MINNA enters, R. I E.*) Oh, Minna, there will be a van full of those this afternoon. Take 'em to the kitchen when they come, they'll do for lighting the fire. (*Exit MINNA, L. C.*)

MRS. S. (*enters, R. I E.*). Well, were you in time?

SALM. Fortunately I was. The printer had hardly sent out any copies. I have had a very pleasant morning, my dear.

MRS. S. Oh, Frederic! (*GRAYLING crosses at back to L.*)

SALM. (C.). Oh, that wasn't all. Look here. (*Takes up newspaper.*) This paper has given me a little surprise. (*To GRAYLING.*) Just read that article, headed "Literary Notes," to my wife.

MRS. S. About you, Frederic?

SALM. Yes, about me. (*MRS. S. pleased.*)

GRAY. (*R. reads*). "During the past few weeks a monthly magazine entitled 'Fragrant Leaflets,' has appeared, which publishes under the head of poetry, some of the most childish doggerel we have ever read" —

MRS. S. Oh!

SALM. Pray go on, sir. There is more to come.

GRAY. "Out of consideration for the families of the contributors we refrain from publishing their names. Doubtless, these gentlemen, when concocting their mass of platitudes, false quantities and plagiarisms, never dreamed of giving them to the world, and would not have done so, but for the arts of a literary adventurer, who saw in their utter inexperience and rural innocence his only chance of enriching himself."

SALM. (C.) "Rural innocence," that's me, you know.
(*GRAYLING gives back newspaper.*)

MRS. S. (R.) I hope you will have the wretch who wrote that up for libel.

SALM. Have him up for libel? I'll have him up for dinner. I'll be his friend for life. For that man is right — he has opened my eyes.

MRS. S. But your society novel.

SALM. It will do to light the fire with.

MRS. S. And all your other works?

SALM. Waste paper. I'm no poet. I always said so. A true poet sometimes has ideas. I never had but one idea in my life, and that comes too late.

(Enter DR. POLLOCK, L.C., quickly.)

DR. P. Victory, my dear friend, victory. I bring you good news.

SALM. He's just in time.

MRS. S. What is it?

DR. P. The "Rondels of a Fiancé" is an immense success. I've just come from the publishers. A gentleman has just been there and bought up the whole edition.

SALM. I know it. Here's the gentleman, and there's the edition. (*Pointing to books.*)

DR. P. You bought it.

SALM. Yes, who else would have been such a fool as to buy such rubbish?

DR. P. Rubbish — excuse me —

SALM. Yes, of course it's rubbish. My wife is not to be blamed; she didn't understand such things, and thought I was a great poet. Here, (*giving newspaper*) you have it in black and white — read it — it's my sentiments too — the writer ridicules me from the bottom of his heart, and I agree with every word he says —

DR. P. (*after reading*). And so do I. (*Folding up paper and returning it.*)

SALM. What?

DR. P. Sir, this writer has convinced me — my theories are all wrong. Amateurs should not seek notoriety. But we will change all that. You and I will start a paper to combat the claims of the bunglers. We will call it the "Wastepaper Basket." We shall be certain of any number of suitable contributors. Do you consent?

SALM. Oh, start what you like, but excuse me from assisting you.

DR. P. Then I have lost you. Is there no other way?

SALM. (*pointing to door, L. C.*). Only one at present. But we'll change all that.

DR. P. And this is the Frederic Salmon whom I have raised from the quagmire of obscurity and placed upon the pinnacle of popularity.

SALM. Popularity indeed; do you wish to make me as big a humbug as you are yourself?

DR. P. Humbug; this is too unkind!

SALM. Yes, sir, humbug; why, I believe your very title of Doctor is a sham.

DR. P. No, sir, I did come by that honestly, for I bought it in Germany.

GRAY. (*to DR. POLLOCK*). I should advise you to take the hint — and your departure.

(*Exit DR. POLLOCK crushed and discomfited; MRS. SALMON goes up R.*)

SALM. I should have lost my temper in another moment. What a fool I've made of myself, eh, Grayling?

GRAY. Don't you remember, sir, that every man once in his life —

SALM. Lays his offering at Folly's feet. Yes, you're a true prophet, Grayling. But it's all over now. By-the-way, what was that request you had to make of me when I was rushing off to the bookseller's this morning?

GRAY. I wished to ask for your daughter's hand. But your wife —

SALM. Well, did my wife say No?

MRS. S. (*coming down, C.*). Certainly, I said No, and I'll stick to it. In a matter concerning my daughter's welfare there shall be no acts of folly.

SALM. But, my dear —

MRS. S. I will not give up my dreams of rank and wealth. If I can't be the wife of a poet, I may be the mother-in-law of a prince.

SALM. Hildegard, are you insane?

MRS. S. (*smiling*). Prince Topolkski fell in love with Rosa's picture, and wishes to make her his wife.

MIN. (*enters, L. C.*). Signor Pescatori, sir.
(*ROSA, MAUD, and PAUL, enter R. 2 E., as PESCATORI comes in L. C.*)

PESC. Signora, a telegrammo.

MRS. S. From the Prince for me. (*Looks round at others.*)

PESC. Si, Signora, for you. (*Gives telegraph message.*)

GRAY. (L., to ROSA). You will keep your promise whatever happens.

ROSA (L. C.). Yes. (*Gives him her hand.*)

(MRS. SALMON, L. C., has read telegram, throws it down with a scream and goes up L.)

SALM. What's the matter, Hildy?

(*Picks up telegram and reads.*)

PESC. Ma, signora, what is wrong?

MRS. S. Out of my sight!

PESC. Out of your eyes. (*Gesture.*)

SALM. Ha — ha — that is — ha — ha — ha — too good.

ROSA. } But, papa —

GRAY. } What can it be?

SALM. (to GRAYLING). There, take her. Mamma will give her consent. Won't you, old lady?

ROSA. But what is the Prince's message?

MRS. S. Frederic, I'm ashamed of myself. (*Comes down, hides her head on SALMON's shoulder.*)

SALM. Nonsense! This was *your* little act of folly, and that ends it. (*Gives telegram to ROSA.*) There, read it yourself, my dear.

ROSA (*reads*). "Just learnt from Signor Pescatore that the portrait, No. 728, in the Exhibition of the Art Club is that of your daughter. This being the case, I have a proposal to make."

ALL. A proposal? There!

ROSA (*reading*). "The portrait the artist has painted is so beautiful that I burn to possess the original."

ALL. What can he mean?

ROSA (*reading*). "Therefore, I am prepared to accede to any terms you may name — for I must and will possess —"

ALL. Yes? (*Intensely interested.*)

ROSA (*triumphantly and falling into GRAYLING's arms*). "The Dog."

PAUL. PESC. MRS. S. SALMON. ROSA. GRAYLING.

R.

QUICK CURTAIN.

L.

New Plays

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A Rural Comedy Drama in Three Acts

By Gordan V. May

Author of "Bar Haven," "At Random Run," etc.

Seven males, five females. Costumes, modern; scenery, one interior, one exterior. Plays two hours. An easy and entertaining play with a well-balanced cast of characters. The story is strong and sympathetic and the comedy element varied and amusing. Barnaby Strutt is a great part for a good comedian; "Junior" a close second. Strongly recommended.

Price, 25 cents

CHARACTERS

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COLONEL BARNABY STRUTT, *"Crawling Codwollopers."*

JONAH JONES, *a farm helper.*

SQUIRE HARCOURT, *who holds a mortgage.*

HARRY HARCOURT, *his profligate son.*

DICK RANDALL, *who seeks his fortune.*

TOM BUSBY, *a traveling merchant.*

AMANDA ARMSTRONG, *Josiah's wife.*

NELLIE ARMSTRONG, *driven from home.*

LAURA ARMSTRONG, *a poor, weak sinner.*

MRS. BARNABY STRUTT, *the Colonel's wife.*

"JUNIOR," *adopted daughter of the Strutts.*

SYNOPSIS

ACT I.—Living-room of Armstrong's home. Spring.

ACT II.—Garden in front of Armstrong's home. Summer.

ACT III.—Same as Act I. Winter.

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Five males. Costumes, modern; scenery, unnecessary. Plays twenty minutes. A good-natured and effective skit on automobiling, very funny and very easy to get up. It requires no scenery or stage, but can be done on a platform just as well. Its fun is extravagant, but it is otherwise suited for school performance.

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CHARACTERS

MR. MORRIS, *nothing if not businesslike.*
MR. COGSWELL-BROWN, *who believes in coöperative housekeeping.*
MR. POTTER-HEWITT, *who looks small, but is not.*
MR. RAYMOND, *who advocates "The New Crusade."*
MR. ARCHIBALD TRACEY, *in search of a maid and experience.*
MR. DOUGLASS MAHONEY, *in search of "an ould gintleman."*
MR. RYAN MACGUIRE, *who likes "the theaytre in the winter toime."*
MR. JUSTA OLSEN, *who comes from "Sweden for big monay."*
MISS SIE CLAY, *who never "takes suggestions from anybody."*
MISS NIE BURCH, *who never "has time for afternoon tea."*
MISS EILDA JOHNSON, *who likes "slaughtermobiles and a choffer."*
MISS MERRY, *the settlement girl—who's always "on de level."*

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One male (played by a woman), seven females, and if desired, sixteen for chorus. Costumes, modern; scene, an interior. Plays forty-five minutes. A very lively and amusing piece introducing fancy dresses, music and dancing. All the parts of about equal opportunity. Irish comedy part and two capital "old maids." Very funny and not difficult. Complete with music for the Suffragettes' song and march and the Old Maids' song and march. Very strongly recommended.

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Five males, two females. Costumes, modern; scene, an easy interior. Plays thirty-five minutes. A side-splitting farce of college life lively enough to suit the most exacting demands. Full of funny incident and telling dialogue. Burlesque actor and "tough" young man parts; the rest "straight" and all good. Recommended for schools.

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CHARACTERS

TOM BRADFORD	} <i>Seniors.</i>	KITTY PETERS, <i>his daughter.</i>
DICK ADAMS		FRANCES WING.
HENRY CARTER	} <i>Juniors.</i>	ELEANOR BRADFORD, <i>Tom's aunt.</i>
PHIL PATTEN		SALLY PRENTISS.
GEORGE ROPES		A MAID.
PROFESSOR PETERS.		A WAITER.

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Six males, one female. Costumes modern; scenery, two interiors. Plays an hour and a quarter. Originally produced by The Mask and Bauble Society of The University of Illinois, and highly recommended for similar uses. Very easy to produce, all the parts of nearly equal opportunity, dramatic interest unusually strong; an unusually well written piece with excellent character drawing. Can be relied upon to please. Royalty of \$5.00 for each performance payable to the author.

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CHARACTERS

DEAN THOMAS, <i>Dean of under-</i>	PHIL HODGE, <i>a senior.</i>
<i>graduates.</i>	CAP. FOSDICK, <i>of the team.</i>
ARTIE, <i>his student office-boy.</i>	EBEN SPAULDING, <i>Lan's uncle.</i>
LAN SPAULDING, <i>of the baseball</i>	HELEN HODGE, <i>Phil's sister.</i>
<i>team.</i>	

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Six males, seven females. Costumes, Irish peasant; scene, an interior. Plays an hour and a half. A little play of strong dramatic interest and quite exceptional charm of style and imaginative power, ideally suited for school performance. A close and accurate study of Irish folk-lore in the manner of Yeats, closely rivaling him in truth of atmosphere and in poetic quality. Highly recommended both as drama and as literature.

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Five males, five females. Costumes, modern; scene, a single interior. Plays one hour and forty minutes. A bright and amusing play with a very even cast of characters. Lots of incident and plenty of action. The leading parts are two sentimental old maids, but their adventures are merely funny and never mawkish. Professional stage rights reserved but free for amateur performance.

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Two males, five females. Costumes, modern; scene, an easy interior. Plays thirty minutes. A very vivacious and entertaining little piece telling a story of life during the honeymoon period, full of laughs and human interest. Easy, bright, up to date and generally to be recommended.

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A Farce in One Act

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Five males, eight females. Costumes, modern ; scene, an interior. Plays one and a half hours. An exceptionally bright and amusing little play of high class and recommended to all classes of amateur players. Full of action and laughs, but refined. Irish low comedy part. Strongly endorsed.

Price, 25 cents

CHARACTERS

MORTIMER J. STERLING, *an easy-going business man.*

VICTOR BROWN, *a young doctor, friend of the family and especially of Minerva.*

HARRY STEVENSON, *a club reporter, attentive to Clara.*

BARNES, *the butler.*

MIKE SHANNON, *a very new policeman.*

MRS. LYDIA STERLING, *domestic and quiet.*

MINERVA STERLING, *willing to oblige.*

CLARA STERLING, *her younger sister.*

MOLLY, *the maid.*

BELLE BRANTLEY, *reporter for "The Screamer."*

MRS. WRIGHT, *a club woman.*

MISS PALMER, *a philanthropic worker.*

MRS. JENNIE VAN DEUSEN SPUYKER, *a Personage.*

Members of the reception committee.

A CHANGE OF HEART

A Comedy in Two Acts

By Albert H. Good

Five males, six females. Costumes, modern ; scene, a single interior. Plays an hour and a half. An easy, pretty and effective play, suited for schools or young people. Scenery not absolutely necessary. Can be recommended.

Price, 25 cents

MAKING A SISTER

A Mock Initiation for Ladies in One Act

By Epes Winthrop Sargent

Ten female characters. Costumes, modern ; scenery unimportant. Plays from forty minutes to an hour. A very bright and lively entertainment, especially strong in its dialogue. Plenty of ludicrous incident and characteristic action, but quite without the element of "rough and tumble" that would be so objectionable in an entertainment for ladies. The candidate is placed in positions that are rather undignified but is neither mussed nor mauled. Strongly recommended.

Price, 25 cents

New Plays

OUR WIVES A Farce in Three Acts

By Anthony E. Wills

Seven males, four females. Costumes, modern; scenery, two interiors. Plays two hours and a half. A bustling, up-to-date farce that deserves the rather worn description of "side-splitting." Full of movement and action; all the parts good and effective; easy to produce; just the thing for an experienced amateur club and hard to spoil, even in the hands of less practical players. Free for amateur performance.

Price, 25 cents

CHARACTERS

ROSSELL CHANDLER, *a retired merchant.* (Old Man.)
WALTER BLAIR, *his son-in-law.* (Comedy Lead.)
OSCAR SIEBEL, *a composer.* (German.)
LLOYD DEVEAUX, *a chronic invalid.* (Character Old Man.)
JOHN STANTON, *a detective.* (Comedy.)
MALLORY, *a reporter.* (Comedy.)
FORD, *an expressman.* (Utility.)
GILDA DEVEAUX, *wife of Deveaux.* (Lead.)
MRS. CHANDLER, *wife of Roswell.* (Old Lady.)
BEATTIE BLAIR, *wife of Walter.* (Straight.)
JULIA, *a French maid.* (French.)

THE PACKING OF THE HOME MISSIONARY BARREL

An Entertainment in One Scene

By Mrs. Henry A. Hallock

Ten females. Costumes, modern; scenery unimportant. Plays thirty minutes. One of those little satires of feminine ways that are so popular even with the ladies; very shrewd and effective, but perfectly good-natured. An assured success and very easy to get up. Strongly recommended.

Price, 15 cents

THE BARGAIN COUNTER A Farce in Three Scenes

By Grace Moody

Five females. Costumes, modern; scene, an interior. Plays thirty minutes. A bright little piece satirizing that institution so dear to the feminine heart—"the bargain counter." Full of good-natured fun; can be recommended.

Price, 15 cents

New Plays

HIS WORD OF HONOR

A Comedy in Three Acts

By Charles Gott

Eleven males, five females. Costumes, modern; scenery, two interiors and an easy exterior. Plays two hours. An exceptionally good college play, high in tone and aim, and faithful in atmosphere and color. Its theme is taken from the serious side of college life,—the so-called "Honor System" in college examinations,—but its humorous traits are various and rich and its general tone gay and vivacious. Very strongly recommended for schools, particularly for co-educational institutions. Will suit both instructors and instructed.

Price, 25 cents

CHARACTERS

DICK WALTHOUR, *a senior.*

HARVEY GRANT, *a senior, president of the Student Council.*

BERT FLEMMING, *Dick's roommate, a junior.*

ARTHUR CARSON, *a Virginian, a junior.*

WILLIAM HENRY FRASER, *alias "Kid," a freshman.*

HUNTER, JACKSON, KING, WILKINS, *students.*

JEREMIAH HACKETT, *a sophomore, Fraser's roommate.*

COFFEY, *a postman.*

HELEN FLEMMING, *Bert's sister, a junior.*

JANETTE GORDON, *a junior.*

MOLLY ATKINS, *a freshman.*

ARETHUSA A. JUDKINS, *a sophomore, a "grind."*

MRS. MACINCHBALD, *the chamber-"maid."*

PROFESSOR NICELY, PROFESSOR LOOMIS, *and others.*

WHEN WOMEN VOTE

A Farce in Two Acts

By Anna P. See

Five females. Costumes, modern; scenery, an easy interior. Plays forty minutes. A good-natured and clever forecast of the time when the Suffragette has won her fight, telling an amusing little story to carry its satire. Good for women's clubs; easy and bright.

Price, 15 cents

BUMPS

A Farce in One Act

By Lillie Davis

Three females. Costumes, modern; scene, an interior. Plays twenty-five minutes. An amusing little hit at the fad of phrenology, suitable for school performance. Clean and bright.

Price 15 cents

New Plays

THE COUNTRY DOCTOR

A Comedy Drama in Four Acts

By Arthur Lewis Tubbs

Author of "Valley Farm," "Willowdale," "The Village School-Ma'am," "The Country Minister," "Miss Buzby's Boarders," etc.

Six males, five females. Costumes, modern; scenery, two interiors. Plays two hours. Easy to stage and full of interest. The female parts are the stronger, being exceptionally good. Negro and "hayseed" comedy parts. A very strong dramatic piece and a sure hit in good hands. Can be recommended on the name of the author, whose plays are always successful.

Price, 25 cents

CHARACTERS

THOMAS BRITTON, M. D., *the village doctor.*

HOWARD WAYNE, *in love with Dolly.*

'SQUIRE FERGUSON, *the sheriff.*

SAM BIRCH, *proprietor of the hotel.*

ZEBEDIAH BUNN, *who hangs around.*

ERI, *that's all.*

BEN SHAW, *the stage-driver.*

AGNES GILBERT, *shadowed by fate.*

DOLLY BRITTON, *the doctor's sister.*

SUSAN PINNER, *his housekeeper.*

MRS. BIRCH, *Sam's wife.*

ANNA BELLE UMSTEAD, *with aspirations.*

SYNOPSIS

ACT I.—Office of the American House, Elmville, N. Y., about nine o'clock on an evening in January.

ACT II.—Dr. Britton's residence, a morning early in the next June.

ACT III.—The same, in the evening, a week later.

ACT IV.—Same as Act I, the next morning.

THE MAN WITH THE NOSE

A Farce in Two Scenes

By Edward P. Knox

Eight males. Costumes, modern; scenery, two interiors. Plays forty minutes. Written especially for performance by boys' schools and recommended for that purpose. Very clever and quite unusual both in idea and in treatment. A great success in its original performance at St. George's Trade School.

Price, 15 cents

New Plays

ELMWOOD FOLKS

A Drama in Three Acts

By Charles S. Bird

Author of "*At the Function*," etc.

Eight males, four females. Costumes, modern; scenery, two interiors, one exterior. Plays a full evening. An easy and very actable piece with an unusually even cast of characters. Clean, wholesome and entertaining; can be recommended for school performance.

Price, 25 cents

CHARACTERS

DAVID BAINBRIDGE, *editor of the Elmwood "Item."*

JAMES WENTWORTH, *an old compositor.*

SQUIRE ALFORD, *a hard man.*

DICK ALFORD, *his stepson, a young lawyer.*

WHITTIER JONES, *a contributor to the "Item."*

TOMMY GAY, *David's apprentice.*

MR. PINCH, *an officer.*

A MESSENGER BOY.

MRS. BAINBRIDGE, *David's wife.*

BESSIE BAINBRIDGE, *their daughter.*

DRUCILLA JONES, *Whittier's aunt.*

MARY GAY, *Mrs. Bainbridge's maid. Tommy's sister.*

SYNOPSIS

ACT I.—Office of the Elmwood *Item*.

ACT II.—Lawn beside the Bainbridge home.

ACT III.—Parlor in the same.

HER UNCLE'S BOOTS

A Farce in One Act

By Mrs. Myrtle Barber Carpenter

Seven females. Costumes, modern; scene, an easy interior. Plays thirty minutes. An easy and effective little play suitable for Girls' Schools or young people in amateur theatricals. Very funny, but with a sympathetic thread of interest. Clean and bright. Recommended.

Price, 15 cents

AN OUTSIDER

A College Play for Girls in One Act

By Wilhemien Wilkes

Seven females. Costumes, modern; scenery, an interior. Plays thirty-five minutes. An unusually strong and sympathetic little play for its length and pretensions, strongly recommended to schools. The story turns upon a basket-ball match and is full of interest.

Price, 15 cents

New Rural Plays

VALLEY FARM

A Drama in Four Acts

By Arthur Lewis Tubbs

Six males, six females. Scenery, two interiors and an exterior. Costumes modern. This play is powerfully emotional, but is relieved by plenty of humor. An admirable play for amateurs, very sympathetic in theme, and with lots of good parts. Hetty is a strong lead, and Perry Deane and Silas great parts; while Azariah, Lizzy Ann Tucker and Verbenia are full of fun. Plays a full evening.

Price, 25 cents

WILLOWDALE

A Play in Three Acts

By Arthur Lewis Tubbs

Seven males, five females. Scenery, two easy interiors; costumes modern. This is a play of exceptional interest and power. Its combination of humor and emotional interest makes it almost certain to please any audience. Admirably suited for amateur performance, all the parts being good. Godfrey is an admirable heavy part, Joel, Lem and Simon capital character parts, Mis' Hazy a novel eccentric bit, and Oleander a part of screaming comedy. Plays two hours and a quarter.

Price, 25 cents

DOWN IN MAINE

A Drama in Four Acts

By Charles Townsend

Eight male, four female characters. This charming play is Mr. Townsend's masterpiece. There are no villains, no "heroics," no tangled plot nor sentimental love-scenes; yet the climaxes are strong, the action brisk, and the humor genial, and the characters strongly drawn. Can be played in any hall; scenery, of the easiest sort. No shifting during any act. Properties, few and simple; costumes modern. Plays a full evening. Strongly recommended.

Price, 25 cents

BAR HAVEN

A Comedy in Three Acts

By Gordan V. May

Six males, five females. Costumes modern; scenery, two interiors and an exterior, not difficult. Plays two hours. An excellent piece, cleverly mingling a strongly serious interest with abundant humor. Offers a great variety of good parts of nearly equal opportunity. Admirably suited for amateur performance, and strongly recommended.

Price, 25 cents

A. W. Pinero's Plays

Price, 50 Cents Each

THE MAGISTRATE Farce in Three Acts. Twelve males, four females. Costumes, modern; scenery, all interior. Plays two hours and a half.

THE NOTORIOUS MRS. EBBSMITH Drama in Four Acts. Eleven males, five females. Costumes, modern; scenery, all interiors. Plays a full evening.

THE PROFLIGATE Play in Four Acts. Seven males, five females. Scenery, three interiors, rather elaborate; costumes, modern. Plays a full evening.

THE SCHOOLMISTRESS Farce in Three Acts. Nine males, seven females. Costumes, modern; scenery, three interiors. Plays a full evening.

THE SECOND MRS. TANQUERAY Play in Four Acts. Eight males, five females. Costumes, modern; scenery, three interiors. Plays a full evening.

SWEET LAVENDER Comedy in Three Acts. Seven males, four females. Scene, a single interior; costumes, modern. Plays a full evening.

THE TIMES Comedy in Four Acts. Six males, seven females. Scene, a single interior; costumes, modern. Plays a full evening.

THE WEAKER SEX Comedy in Three Acts. Eight males, eight females. Costumes, modern; scenery, two interiors. Plays a full evening.

A WIFE WITHOUT A SMILE Comedy in Three Acts. Five males, four females. Costumes, modern; scene, a single interior. Plays a full evening.

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AS YOU LIKE IT Comedy in Five Acts. Thirteen males, four females. Costumes, picturesque; scenery, varied. Plays a full evening.

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THE RIVALS Comedy in Five Acts. Nine males, five females. Scenery varied; costumes of the period. Plays a full evening.

SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER Comedy in Five Acts. Fifteen males, four females. Scenery varied; costumes of the period. Plays a full evening.

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